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Jo Sedley, breathing heavily with desire, came nearer. Then in the saddest part of her song, sly Becky let her voice tremble. She had him!

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VANITY FAIR

A NOVEL WITHOUT A HERO

By WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

THE BOOK LEAGUE OF AMERICA

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CHAPTER I

WHILE the present century was in its teens, and on one sunshiny morning in June, there drove up to the great iron gate of Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies on Chiswick Mall a large family coach with two fat horses in blazing harness, driven by a fat coachman in a three-cornered hat and wig at the rate of four miles an hour. A black servant who reposed on the box beside the fat coachman uncurled his bandy legs as soon as the equipage drew up opposite Miss Pinkerton's shining brass plate, and as he pulled the bell at least a score of young heads were seen peering out of the narrow windows of the stately old brick house. Nay, the acute observer might have recognized the little red nose of good-natured Miss Jemima Pinkerton herself rising over some geranium pots in the window of that lady's own drawing-room.

"It is Mrs. Sedley's coach, Sister," said Miss Jemima. "Sambo, the black servant, has just rung the bell, and the coachman has a new red waistcoat."

"Have you completed all the necessary preparations incident to Miss Sedley's departure, Miss Jemima?" asked Miss Pinkerton herself, that majestic lady, the Semiramis of Hammersmith, the friend of Doctor Johnson, the correspondent of Mrs. Chapone herself.

"The girls were up at four this morning packing her trunks, Sister," replied Miss Jemima. "We have made her a boughpot."

"Say a bouquet, Sister Jemima, 'tis more genteel."

"Well, a booky as big almost as a haystack. I have put up two bottles of the gillyflower water for Mrs. Sedley, and the receipt for making it, in Amelia's box."

"And I trust, Miss Jemima, you have made a copy of Miss Sedley's account. This is it, is it? Very good—ninety-three pounds four shillings. Be kind enough to address it to John Sedley, Esquire, and to seal this billet which I have written to his lady."

In Miss Jemima's eyes an autograph letter of her sister Miss Pinkerton was an object of as deep veneration as would have been a letter from a sovereign. Only when her pupils quitted the establishment, or when they were about to be married, and once when poor Miss Birch died of the scarlet fever, was Miss Pinkerton known to write personally to the parents of her pupils; and it was Jemima's opinion that if anything *could* console Mrs. Birch for her daughter's loss, it would be that pious and eloquent composition in which Miss Pinkerton announced the event.

In the present instance Miss Pinkerton's "billet" was to the following effect:

THE MALL, CHISWICK, June 15, 18–

Madame: After her six years' residence at the Mall, I have the honor and happiness of presenting Miss Amelia Sedley to her parents as a young lady not unworthy to occupy a fitting position in their polished and refined

circle. Those virtues which characterize the young English gentlewoman, those accomplishments which become her birth and station, will not be found wanting in the amiable Miss Sedley, whose *industry* and *obedience* have endeared her to her instructors, and whose delightful sweetness of temper has charmed her *aged* and her *youthful* companions.

In music, in dancing, in orthography, in every variety of embroidery and needlework, she will be found to have realized her friends' *fondest wishes*. In geography there is still much to be desired; and a careful and undeviating use of the backboard for four hours daily during the next three years is recommended as necessary to the acquirement of that dignified *deportment and carriage* so requisite for every young lady of *fashion*.

In the principles of religion and morality, Miss Sedley will be found worthy of an establishment which has been honored by the presence of *The Great Lexicographer* and the patronage of the admirable Mrs. Chapone. In leaving the Mall, Miss Amelia carries with her the hearts of her companions, and the affectionate regards of her mistress, who has the honor to subscribe herself,

Madame,
Your most obliged humble servant,
BARBARA PINKERTON

P.S.—Miss Sharp accompanies Miss Sedley. It is particularly requested that Miss Sharp's stay in Russell Square may not exceed ten days. The family of distinction with whom she is engaged desire to avail themselves of her services as soon as possible.

This letter completed, Miss Pinkerton proceeded to write her own name and Miss Sedley's in the flyleaf of a Johnson's *Dictionary*—the interesting work which she invariably presented to her scholars on their departure from the Mall. On the cover was inserted a copy of "Lines Addressed to a Young Lady on Quitting Miss Pinkerton's School, at the Mall; by the late revered Doctor Samuel Johnson." In fact, the lexicographer's name was always on the lips of this majestic woman, and a visit he had paid to her was the cause of her reputation and her fortune.

Being commanded by her elder sister to get "the *dictionary*" from the cupboard, Miss Jemima had extracted two copies of the book from the receptacle in question. When Miss Pinkerton had finished the inscription in the first Jemima, with rather a dubious and timid air, handed her the second.

"For whom is this, Miss Jemima?" said Miss Pinkerton with awful coldness.

"For Becky Sharp," answered Jemima, trembling very much and blushing over her withered face and neck as she turned her back on her sister. "For Becky Sharp. She's going, too."

"MISS JEMIMA!" exclaimed Miss Pinkerton, in the largest capitals. "Are you in your senses? Replace the *dixonary* in the closet, and never venture to take such a liberty in future."

"Well, Sister, it's only two-and-ninepence, and poor Becky will be miserable if she don't get one."

"Send Miss Sedley instantly to me," said Miss Pinkerton. And so, venturing not to say another word, poor Jemima trotted off, exceedingly flurried and nervous.

Miss Sedley's papa was a merchant in London, and a man of some wealth, whereas Miss Sharp was an articled pupil for whom Miss Pinkerton had done, as she thought, quite enough without conferring upon her at parting the high honor of the *dixonary*.

But as we are to see a great deal of Amelia, there is no harm in saying at the outset of our acquaintance that she was a dear little creature. And a great mercy it is, both in life and in novels, which (and the latter especially) abound in villains of the most somber sort, that we are to have for a constant companion so guileless and good-natured a person. As she is not a heroine, there is no need to describe her person. Indeed I am afraid that her nose was rather short than otherwise, and her cheeks a great deal too round and red for a heroine; but her face blushed with rosy health and her lips with the freshest of smiles, and she had a pair of eyes which sparkled with the brightest and honestest good humor—except, indeed, when they filled with tears, and that was a great deal too often; for the silly thing would cry over a dead canary bird, or over a mouse that the cat haply had seized upon, or over the end of a novel, were it ever so stupid. And as for saying an unkind word to her, were any person hardhearted enough to do so—why, so much the worse for them. Even Miss Pinkerton, that austere and godlike woman, ceased scolding her after the first time, and though she no more comprehended sensibility than she did algebra, gave all masters and teachers particular orders to treat Miss Sedley with the utmost gentleness, as harsh treatment was injurious to her.

So that when the day of departure came, between her two customs of laughing and crying Miss Sedley was greatly puzzled how to act. She was glad to go home, and yet most woefully sad at leaving school. For three days before, little Laura Martin, the orphan, followed her about like a little dog. She had to make and receive at least fourteen presents—to make fourteen solemn promises of writing every week. "Send my letters under cover to my grandpapa, the Earl of Dexter," said Miss Saltire (who, by the way, was rather shabby). "Never mind the postage, but write every day, you dear darling," said the impetuous and woolly-headed but generous and affectionate Miss Swartz. And the orphan, little Laura Martin (who was just in roundhand), took her friend's hand and said, looking up in her face wistfully, "Amelia, when I write to you I shall call you Mamma."

"You'll go in and say good-by to Miss Pinkerton, Becky," said Miss Jemima to a young lady of whom nobody took any notice, and who was coming downstairs with her own bandbox.

"I suppose I must," said Miss Sharp calmly and much to the wonder of Miss Jemima, and the latter having knocked at the door and received permission to come in, Miss Sharp advanced in a very unconcerned manner and said in French, and with a perfect accent, "*Mademoiselle, je viens vous faire mes adieux.*"

Miss Pinkerton did not understand French, she only directed those who did;

but biting her lips and throwing up her venerable and Roman-nosed head (on the top of which figured a large and solemn turban), she said, "Miss Sharp, I wish you a good morning." As the Hammersmith Semiramis spoke she waved one hand, both by way of adieu and to give Miss Sharp an opportunity of shaking one of the fingers of the hand which was left out for that purpose.

Miss Sharp only folded her own hands with a very frigid smile and bow and quite declined to accept the proffered honor, on which Semiramis tossed up her turban more indignantly than ever. In fact, it was a little battle between the young lady and the old one, and the latter was worsted. "Heaven bless you, my child," said she, embracing Amelia and scowling the while over the girl's shoulder at Miss Sharp. "Come away, Becky," said Miss Jemima, pulling the young woman away in great alarm, and the drawing-room door closed upon them forever.

Then came the struggle and parting below. Words refuse to tell it. All the servants were there in the hall—all the dear friends—all the young ladies—the dancing master, who had just arrived; and there was such a scuffling, and hugging, and kissing, and crying, with the hysterical *yoops* of Miss Swartz, the parlor boarder, from her room, as no pen can depict and as the tender heart would fain pass over. The embracing was over. They parted—that is, Miss Sedley parted from her friends. Miss Sharp had demurely entered the carriage some minutes before. Nobody cried for leaving *her*.

Sambo of the bandy legs slammed the carriage door on his young weeping mistress. He sprang up behind the carriage. "Stop!" cried Miss Jemima, rushing to the gate with a parcel.

"It's some sandwiches, my dear," said she to Amelia. "You may be hungry, you know. And Becky, Becky Sharp, here's a book for you that my sister—that is, I—Johnson's *Dixonary*, you know. You mustn't leave us without that. Good-by. Drive on, coachman. God bless you!"

And the kind creature retreated into the garden, overcome with emotion. But, lo! and just as the coach drove off, Miss Sharp put her pale face out of the window and actually flung the book back into the garden.

This almost caused Jemima to faint with terror. "Well, I never," said she. "What an audacious——" Emotion prevented her from completing either sentence. The carriage rolled away, the great gates were closed, the bell rang for the dancing lesson. The world is before the two young ladies, and so farewell to Chiswick Mall.

CHAPTER II

When Miss Sharp had performed the heroical act mentioned in the last chapter and had seen the *Dixonary*, flying over the pavement of the little garden, fall at length at the feet of the astonished Miss Jemima, the young lady's countenance, which had before worn an almost livid look of hatred, assumed a smile that perhaps was scarcely more agreeable, and she sank back in the carriage

in an easy frame of mind, saying: "So much for the *Dixonary*. And, thank God, I'm out of Chiswick."

Miss Sedley was almost as flurried at the act of defiance as Miss Jemima had been; for consider, it was but one minute that she had left school, and the impressions of six years are not got over in that space of time. Miss Sedley was exceedingly alarmed at this act of insubordination.

"How could you do so, Rebecca?" at last she said, after a pause.

"Why, do you think Miss Pinkerton will come out and order me back to the black hole?" said Rebecca, laughing.

"No, but—"

"I hate the whole house," continued Miss Sharp in a fury. "I hope I may never set eyes on it again. I wish it were in the bottom of the Thames, I do. And if Miss Pinkerton were there, I wouldn't pick her out, that I wouldn't. Oh, how I should like to see her floating in the water, turban and all, with her train streaming after her, and her nose like the beak of a wherry!"

"Hush!" cried Miss Sedley.

"Why, will the black footman tell tales?" cried Miss Rebecca, laughing. "He may go back and tell Miss Pinkerton that I hate her with all my soul. And I wish he would, and I wish I had a means of proving it, too. For two years I have had only insults and outrage from her. I have been treated worse than any servant in the kitchen. I have never had a friend or a kind word, except from you. I have been made to tend the little girls in the lower schoolroom, and to talk French to the misses until I grew sick of my mother tongue. But that talking French to Miss Pinkerton was capital fun, wasn't it? She doesn't know a word of French, and was too proud to confess it. I believe it was that which made her part with me, and so thank Heaven for French. *Vive la France! Vive l'Empereur! Vive Bonaparte!*"

"Oh, Rebecca, Rebecca, for shame!" cried Miss Sedley. For this was the greatest blasphemy Rebecca had as yet uttered, and in those days in England, to say "Long live Bonaparte!" was as much as to say "Long live Lucifer!" "How can you—how dare you have such wicked, revengeful thoughts?"

"Revenge may be wicked, but it's natural," answered Miss Rebecca. "I'm no angel." And to say the truth, she certainly was not.

Miss Sharp's father was an artist, and in that quality had given lessons of drawing at Miss Pinkerton's school. He was a clever man, a pleasant companion, a careless student, with a great propensity for running into debt and a partiality for the tavern. When he was drunk, he used to beat his wife and daughter, and the next morning, with a headache, he would rail at the world for its neglect of his genius and abuse, with a good deal of cleverness and sometimes with perfect reason, the fools, his brother painters. As it was with the utmost difficulty that he could keep himself, and as he owed money for a mile around Soho, where he lived, he thought to better his circumstances by marrying a young woman of the French nation who was by profession an opera girl. The humble calling of her female parent Miss Sharp never alluded to, but used to state subsequently that the Entrechats were a noble family of Gascony, and

took great pride in her descent from them. And curious it is that as she advanced in life this young lady's ancestors increased in rank and splendor.

Rebecca's mother had had some education somewhere, and her daughter spoke French with purity and a Parisian accent. It was in those days rather a rare accomplishment, and led to her engagement with the orthodox Miss Pinkerton. For her mother being dead, her father, finding himself not likely to recover after his third attack of delirium tremens, wrote a manly and pathetic letter to Miss Pinkerton recommending the orphan child to her protection, and so descended to the grave after two bailiffs had quarreled over his corpse. Rebecca was seventeen when she came to Chiswick and was bound over as an articled pupil, her duties being to talk French, as we have seen, and her privileges to live cost-free and, with a few guineas a year, to gather scraps of knowledge from the professors who attended the school.

She was small and slight in person, pale, sandy-haired, and with eyes habitually cast down. When they looked up, they were very large, odd, and attractive, so attractive that the Reverend Mr. Crisp, fresh from Oxford and curate to the Vicar of Chiswick, the Reverend Mr. Flowerdew, fell in love with Miss Sharp, being shot dead by a glance of her eyes which was fired all the way across Chiswick church from the school pew to the reading desk. This infatuated young man used sometimes to take tea with Miss Pinkerton, to whom he had been presented by his mamma, and actually proposed something like marriage in an intercepted note which the one-eyed apple woman was charged to deliver. Mrs. Crisp was summoned from Buxton, and abruptly carried off her darling boy; but the idea, even, of such an eagle in the Chiswick dovecot caused a great flutter in the breast of Miss Pinkerton, who would have sent away Miss Sharp but that she was bound to her under a forfeit, and who never could thoroughly believe the young lady's protestations that she had never exchanged a single word with Mr. Crisp except under her own eyes on the two occasions when she had met him at tea.

By the side of many tall and bouncing young ladies in the establishment, Rebecca Sharp looked like a child. But she had the dismal precocity of poverty. Many a dun had she talked to and turned away from her father's door. Many a tradesman had she coaxed and wheedled into good humor and into the granting of one meal more. She sat commonly with her father, who was very proud of her wit, and heard the talk of many of his wild companions—often but ill-suited for a girl to hear. But she never had been a girl, she said, she had been a woman since she was eight years old. Oh, why did Miss Pinkerton let such a dangerous bird into her cage?

The fact is, the old lady believed Rebecca to be the meekest creature in the world, so admirably, on the occasions when her father brought her to Chiswick, used Rebecca to perform the part of the ingénue. And only a year before the arrangement by which Rebecca had been admitted into her house, and when Rebecca was sixteen years old, Miss Pinkerton majestically, and with a little speech, made her a present of a doll. How the father and daughter laughed as they trudged home together after the evening party, and how Miss Pinkerton would have raged had she seen the caricature of herself which the

little mimic Rebecca managed to make out of her doll. Becky used to go through dialogues with it. It formed the delight of Newman Street, Gerard Street, and the artists' quarter, and the young painters, when they came to take their gin and water with their lazy, dissolute, clever, jovial senior, used regularly to ask Rebecca if Miss Pinkerton was at home. Once Rebecca had the honor to pass a few days at Chiswick, after which she brought back Jemima and erected another doll as Miss Jemmy; for though that honest creature had made and given her jelly and cake enough for three children, and a seven-shilling piece at parting, the girl's sense of ridicule was far stronger than her gratitude, and she sacrificed Miss Jemmy quite as pitilessly as her sister.

The catastrophe came, and she was brought to the Mall as to her home. The rigid formality of the place suffocated her. The prayers and the meals, the lessons and the walks, which were arranged with a conventional regularity, oppressed her almost beyond endurance; and she looked back to the freedom and the beggary of the old studio in Soho with so much regret that everybody, herself included, fancied she was consumed with grief for her father. She had a little room in the garret, where the maids heard her walking and sobbing at night—but it was with rage and not with grief. She had not been much of a dissembler until now her loneliness taught her to feign. She had never mingled in the society of women. Her father, reprobate as he was, was a man of talent; his conversation was a thousand times more agreeable to her than the talk of such of her own sex as she now encountered. The pompous vanity of the old schoolmistress, the foolish good humor of her sister, the silly chat and scandal of the elder girls, and the frigid correctness of the governesses equally annoyed her. And she had no soft maternal heart, this unlucky girl; otherwise the prattle and talk of the younger children, with whose care she was chiefly entrusted, might have soothed and interested her; but she lived among them two years and not one was sorry she went away. The gentle, tenderhearted Amelia Sedley was the only person to whom she could attach herself in the least—and who could help attaching herself to Amelia?

The happiness, the superior advantages, of the young women round about her gave Rebecca inexpressible pangs of envy. "What airs that girl gives herself because she is an earl's granddaughter!" she said of one. "How they cringe and bow to that Creole because of her hundred thousand pounds! I am a thousand times cleverer and more charming than that creature, for all her wealth. I am as well-bred as the earl's granddaughter, for all her fine pedigree. And yet everyone passes me by here. And yet when I was at my father's did not the men give up their gayest balls and parties in order to pass the evening with me?" She determined at any rate to get free from the prison in which she found herself, and now began to act for herself, and for the first time to make connected plans for the future.

She took advantage, therefore, of the means of study the place offered her, and as she was already a musician and a good linguist, she speedily went through the little course of study which was considered necessary for ladies in those days. Her music she practiced incessantly, and one day when the girls were out and she had remained at home she was overheard to play a piece

so well that Minerva thought, wisely, she could spare herself the expense of a master for the juniors, and intimated to Miss Sharp that she was to instruct them in music for the future.

The girl refused, and for the first time, and to the astonishment of the majestic mistress of the school. "I am here to speak French with the children," Rebecca said abruptly, "not to teach them music and save money for you. Give me money and I will teach them."

Minerva was obliged to yield, and of course disliked her from that day. "For five-and-thirty years," she said, and with great justice, "I never have seen the individual who has dared in my own house to question my authority. I have nourished a viper in my bosom."

"A viper—a fiddlestick," said Miss Sharp to the old lady almost fainting with astonishment. "You took me because I was useful. There is no question of gratitude between us. I hate this place, and want to leave it. I will do nothing here but what I am obliged to do."

It was in vain that the old lady asked her if she was aware she was speaking to Miss Pinkerton. Rebecca laughed in her face, with a horrid sarcastic demoniacal laughter that almost sent the schoolmistress into fits. "Give me a sum of money," said the girl, "and get rid of me—or, if you like better, get me a good place as governess in a nobleman's family—you can do so if you please." And in their further disputes she always returned to this point: "Get me a situation—we hate each other, and I am ready to go."

Worthy Miss Pinkerton, although she had a Roman nose and a turban and was as tall as a grenadier, and had been up to this time an irresistible princess, had no will or strength like that of her little apprentice, and in vain did battle against her and tried to overawe her. Attempting once to scold her in public, Rebecca hit upon the before-mentioned plan of answering her in French, which quite routed the old woman. In order to maintain authority in her school, it became necessary to remove this rebel, this monster, this serpent, this firebrand; and hearing about this time that Sir Pitt Crawley's family was in want of a governess, she actually recommended Miss Sharp for the situation, firebrand and serpent as she was. "I cannot, certainly," she said, "find fault with Miss Sharp's conduct, except to myself, and must allow that her talents and accomplishments are of a high order. As far as the head goes, at least, she does credit to the educational system pursued at my establishment."

And so the schoolmistress reconciled the recommendation to her conscience, and the indentures were canceled and the apprentice was free. The battle here described in a few lines of course lasted for some months. And as Miss Sedley, being now in her seventeenth year, was about to leave school, and had a friendship for Miss Sharp—"'Tis the only point in Amelia's behavior," said Minerva, "which has not been satisfactory to her mistress"—Miss Sharp was invited by her friend to pass a week with her at home before she entered upon her duties as governess in a private family.

Thus the world began for these two young ladies. For Amelia it was quite a new, fresh, brilliant world, with all the bloom upon it. It was not quite a new one for Rebecca.

By the time the young ladies reached Kensington turnpike, Amelia had not forgotten her companions, but had dried her tears and had blushed very much and been delighted at a young officer of the Life Guards who spied her as he was riding by and said, "A dem fine gal, egad!" And before the carriage arrived in Russell Square, a great deal of conversation had taken place about the drawing-room, and whether or not young ladies wore powder as well as hoops when presented, and whether she was to have that honor; to the Lord Mayor's ball she knew she was to go. And when at length home was reached, Miss Amelia Sedley skipped out on Sambo's arm, as happy and as handsome a girl as any in the whole big city of London. Both he and the coachman agreed on this point, and so did her father and mother, and so did every one of the servants in the house as they stood bobbing and curtsying and smiling in the hall to welcome their young mistress.

You may be sure that she showed Rebecca over every room of the house, and everything in every one of her drawers; and her books, and her piano, and her dresses, and all her necklaces, brooches, laces, and gimcracks. She insisted upon Rebecca accepting the white carnelian and the turquoise rings, and a sweet sprigged muslin, which was too small for her now, though it would fit her friend to a nicety. And she determined in her heart to ask her mother's permission to present her white Cashmere shawl to her friend. Could she not spare it, and had not her brother Joseph just brought her two from India?

When Rebecca saw the two magnificent Cashmere shawls which Joseph Sedley had brought home to his sister, she said, with perfect truth, that "it must be delightful to have a brother," and easily got the pity of the tenderhearted Amelia for being alone in the world, an orphan without friends or kindred.

"Not alone," said Amelia. "You know, Rebecca, I shall always be your friend, and love you as a sister—indeed I will."

"Ah, but to have parents, as you have—kind, rich, affectionate parents who give you everything you ask for, and their love, which is more precious than all! My poor Papa could give me nothing, and I had but two frocks in all the world! And then to have a brother, a dear brother! Oh, how you must love him!"

Amelia laughed.

"What! *Don't* you love him? You, who say you love everybody?"

"Yes, of course, I do—only——"

"Only what?"

"Only Joseph doesn't seem to care much whether I love him or not. He gave me two fingers to shake when he arrived after ten years' absence. He is very kind and good, but he scarcely ever speaks to me. I think he loves his pipe a great deal better than his——" but here Amelia checked herself, for why should she speak ill of her brother? "He was very kind to me as a child," she added. "I was but five years old when he went away."

"Isn't he very rich?" said Rebecca. "They say all Indian nabobs are enormously rich."

"I believe he has a very large income."

"And is your sister-in-law a nice, pretty woman?"

"La! Joseph is not married," said Amelia, laughing again.

Perhaps she had mentioned the fact already to Rebecca, but that young lady did not appear to have remembered it, indeed vowed and protested that she expected to see a number of Amelia's nephews and nieces. She was quite disappointed that Mr. Sedley was not married. She was sure Amelia had said he was, and she doted so on little children.

"I think you must have had enough of them at Chiswick," said Amelia, rather wondering at the sudden tenderness on her friend's part. And indeed in later days Miss Sharp would never have committed herself so far as to advance opinions the untruth of which would have been so easily detected. But we must remember that she is but nineteen as yet, unused to the art of deceiving, poor innocent creature! and making her own experience in her own person. The meaning of the above series of queries, as translated in the heart of this ingenious young woman, was simply this: "If Mr. Joseph Sedley is rich and unmarried, why should I not marry him? I have only a fortnight, to be sure, but there is no harm in trying." And she determined within herself to make this laudable attempt. She redoubled her caresses to Amelia, she kissed the white carnelian necklace as she put it on, and vowed she would never, never part with it. When the dinner bell rang, she went downstairs with her arm around her friend's waist, as is the habit of young ladies. She was so agitated at the drawing-room door that she could hardly find courage to enter. "Feel my heart, how it beats, dear!" said she to her friend.

"No, it doesn't," said Amelia. "Come in, don't be frightened. Papa won't do you any harm."

CHAPTER III

A VERY stout, puffy man in buckskins and Hessian boots, with several immense neckcloths that rose almost to his nose, with a red striped waistcoat and an apple-green coat with steel buttons almost as large as crown pieces (it was the morning costume of a dandy or blood in those days), was reading the paper by the fire when the two girls entered, and bounced off his armchair, and blushed excessively, and hid his entire face almost in his neckcloths at this apparition.

"It's only your sister, Joseph," said Amelia, laughing and shaking the two fingers which he held out. "I've come home *for good*, you know. And this is my friend Miss Sharp, whom you have heard me mention."

"No, never, upon my word," said the head under the neckcloth, shaking very much. "That is, yes—what abominably cold weather, miss." And herewith he fell to poking the fire with all his might, although it was in the middle of June.

"He's very handsome," whispered Rebecca to Amelia, rather loud.

"Do you think so?" said the latter. "I'll tell him."

"Darling! Not for worlds," said Miss Sharp, starting back as timid as a fawn.

She had previously made a respectful, virginlike courtsey to the gentleman, and her modest eyes gazed so perseveringly on the carpet that it was a wonder how she should have found an opportunity to see him.

"Thank you for the beautiful shawls, Brother," said Amelia to the fire-poker. "Are they not beautiful, Rebecca?"

"Oh, heavenly!" said Miss Sharp, and her eyes went from the carpet straight to the chandelier.

Joseph still continued a huge clattering at the poker and tongs, puffing and blowing the while and turning as red as his yellow face would allow him.

"I can't make you such handsome presents, Joseph," continued his sister, "but while I was at school I have embroidered for you a very beautiful pair of braces."

"Good gad! Amelia," cried the brother, in serious alarm, "what do you mean?" And plunging with all his might at the bell rope, that article of furniture came away in his hand and increased the honest fellow's confusion. "For heaven's sake see if my buggy's at the door. I *can't* wait. I must go. Damn that groom of mine. I must go."

At this minute the father of the family walked in, rattling his seals like a true British merchant. "What's the matter, Emmy?" says he.

"Joseph wants me to see if his—his *buggy* is at the door. What is a buggy, Papa?"

"It is a one-horse palanquin," said the old gentleman, who was a wag in his way.

Joseph at this burst out into a wild fit of laughter, in which, encountering the eye of Miss Sharp, he stopped all of a sudden as if he had been shot.

"This young lady is your friend? Miss Sharp, I am very happy to see you. Have you and Emmy been quarreling already with Joseph, that he wants to be off?"

"I promised Bonamy, of our service, sir," said Joseph, "to dine with him."

"Oh, fie! Didn't you tell your mother you would dine here?"

"But in this dress it's impossible."

"Look at him. Isn't he handsome enough to dine anywhere, Miss Sharp?"

On which, of course, Miss Sharp looked at her friend, and they both set off in a fit of laughter highly agreeable to the old gentleman.

"Did you ever see a pair of buckskins like those at Miss Pinkerton's?" continued he, following up his advantage.

"Gracious heavens, Father!" cried Joseph.

"There now, I have hurt his feelings. Mrs. Sedley, my dear, I have hurt your son's feelings. I have alluded to his buckskins. Ask Miss Sharp if I haven't. Come, Joseph, be friends with Miss Sharp, and let us all go to dinner."

"There's a pilau, Joseph, just as you like it, and Papa has brought home the best turbot in Billingsgate."

"Come, come, sir, walk downstairs with Miss Sharp and I will follow with these two young women," said the father, and he took an arm of wife and daughter and walked merrily off.

If Miss Rebecca Sharp had determined in her heart upon making the con-

quest of this big beau, I don't think, ladies, we have any right to blame her; for though the task of husband-hunting is generally, and with becoming modesty, entrusted by young persons to their mammas, recollect that Miss Sharp had no kind parent to arrange these delicate matters for her, and that if she did not get a husband for herself, there was no one else in the wide world who would take the trouble off her hands. What causes young people to "come *out*" but the noble ambition of matrimony? What sends them trooping to watering places? What keeps them dancing till five o'clock in the morning through a whole mortal season? What causes them to labor at pianoforte sonatas, and to learn four songs from a fashionable master at a guinea a lesson, and to play the harp if they have handsome arms and neat elbows, and to wear Lincoln-green toxophilite hats and feathers, but that they may bring down some "desirable" young man with those killing bows and arrows of theirs? What causes respectable parents to take up their carpets, set their houses topsy-turvy, and spend a fifth of their year's income in ball suppers and iced champagne? Is it sheer love of their species, and an unadulterated wish to see young people happy and dancing? Psha! They want to marry their daughters, and as honest Mrs. Sedley has, in the depths of her kind heart, already arranged a score of little schemes for the settlement of her Amelia, so also had our beloved but unprotected Rebecca determined to do her very best to secure the husband who was even more necessary for her than for her friend.

She had a vivid imagination. She had, besides, read the *Arabian Nights* and *Guthrie's Geography*. And it is a fact that while she was dressing for dinner, and after she had asked Amelia whether her brother was very rich, she had built for herself a most magnificent castle in the air of which she was mistress, with a husband somewhere in the background. She had arrayed herself in an infinity of shawls, turbans, and diamond necklaces, and had mounted upon an elephant to the sound of the march in *Bluebeard*, in order to pay a visit of ceremony to the Grand Mogul.

Joseph Sedley was twelve years older than his sister Amelia. He was in the East India Company's Civil Service, and his name appeared, at the period of which we write, in the Bengal division of the East India Register as Collector of Boggley Wollah, an honorable and lucrative post, as everybody knows. In order to know to what higher posts Joseph rose in the service, the reader is referred to the same periodical.

Boggley Wollah is situated in a fine, lonely, marshy, jungly district famous for snipe-shooting and where not unfrequently you may flush a tiger. Ramgunge, where there is a magistrate, is only forty miles off, and there is a cavalry station about thirty miles farther—so Joseph wrote home to his parents when he took possession of his collectorship. He had lived for about eight years of his life quite alone at this charming place, scarcely seeing a Christian face except twice a year, when the detachment arrived to carry off the revenues which he had collected to Calcutta.

Luckily, at this time he caught a liver complaint, for the cure of which he returned to Europe, and which was the source of great comfort and amusement to him in his native country. He did not live with his family while in London,

but had lodgings of his own, like a gay young bachelor. Before he went to India he was too young to partake of the delightful pleasures of a man about town, and plunged into them on his return with considerable assiduity. He drove his horses in the Park, he dined at the fashionable taverns (for the Oriental Club was not as yet invented), he frequented the theaters, as the mode was in those days, or made his appearance at the opera laboriously attired in tights and a cocked hat.

On returning to India, and ever after, he used to talk of the pleasure of this period of his existence with great enthusiasm, and give you to understand that he and Brummell were the leading bucks of the day. But he was as lonely here as in his jungle at Boggley Wollah. He scarcely knew a single soul in the metropolis, and were it not for his doctor, and the society of his blue pill and his liver complaint, he must have died of loneliness. He was lazy, peevish, and a bon vivant. The appearance of a lady frightened him beyond measure, hence it was but seldom that he joined the paternal circle in Russell Square, where there was plenty of gaiety and where the jokes of his good-natured old father frightened his amour-propre. His bulk caused Joseph much anxious thought and alarm. Now and then he would make a desperate attempt to get rid of his superabundant fat, but his indolence and love of good living speedily got the better of these endeavors at reform, and he found himself again at his three meals a day.

He never was well dressed, but he took the hugest pains to adorn his big person and passed many hours daily in that occupation. His valet made a fortune out of his wardrobe. His toilet table was covered with as many pomatums and essences as ever were employed by an old beauty. He had tried, in order to give himself a waist, every girth, stay, and waistband then invented. Like most fat men, he *would* have his clothes made too tight, and took care they should be of the most brilliant colors and youthful cut. When dressed at length, in the afternoon he would issue forth to take a drive with nobody in the Park, and then would come back in order to dress again and go and dine with nobody at the Piazza Coffeehouse. He was as vain as a girl, and perhaps his extreme shyness was one of the results of his extreme vanity. If Miss Rebecca can get the better of *him*, and at her first entrance into life, she is a young person of no ordinary cleverness.

The first move showed considerable skill. When she called Sedley a very handsome man, she knew that Amelia would tell her mother, who would probably tell Joseph or who at any rate would be pleased by the compliment paid to her son. All mothers are. If you had told Sycorax that her son Caliban was as handsome as Apollo, she would have been pleased, witch as she was. Perhaps, too, Joseph Sedley would overhear the compliment—Rebecca spoke loud enough—and he *did* hear, and (thinking in his heart that he was a very fine man) the praise thrilled through every fiber of his big body and made it tingle with pleasure. Then, however, came a recoil. "Is the girl making fun of me?" he thought, and straightway he bounced toward the bell and was for retreating, as we have seen, when his father's jokes and his mother's entreaties caused him to pause and stay where he was. He conducted the young lady

down to dinner in a dubious and agitated frame of mind. "Does she really think I am handsome?" thought he. "Or is she only making game of me?" We have talked of Joseph Sedley being as vain as a girl. Heaven help us! The girls have only to turn the tables and say of one of their own sex, "She is as vain as a man," and they will have perfect reason. The bearded creatures are quite as eager for praise, quite as finical over their toilets, quite as proud of their personal advantages, quite as conscious of their powers of fascination, as any coquette in the world.

Downstairs, then, they went, Joseph very red and blushing, Rebecca very modest and holding her green eyes downward. She was dressed in white, with bare shoulders as white as snow—the picture of youth, unprotected innocence, and humble virgin simplicity. "I must be very quiet," thought Rebecca, "and very much interested about India."

Now we have heard how Mrs. Sedley had prepared a fine curry for her son, just as he liked it, and in the course of dinner a portion of this dish was offered to Rebecca. "What is it?" said she, turning an appealing look to Mr. Joseph.

"Capital," said he. His mouth was full of it, his face quite red with the delightful exercise of gobbling. "Mother, it's as good as my own curries in India."

"Oh, I must try some if it is an Indian dish," said Miss Rebecca. "I am sure everything must be good that comes from there."

"Give Miss Sharp some curry, my dear," said Mr. Sedley, laughing.

Rebecca had never tasted the dish before.

"Do you find it as good as everything else from India?" said Mr. Sedley.

"Oh, excellent!" said Rebecca, who was suffering tortures with the cayenne pepper.

"Try a chili with it, Miss Sharp," said Joseph, really interested.

"A chili," said Rebecca, gasping. "Oh, yes!" She thought a chili was something cool, as its name imported, and was served with some. "How fresh and green they look!" she said, and put one into her mouth. It was hotter than the curry. Flesh and blood could bear it no longer. She laid down her fork. "Water, for heaven's sake, water!" she cried. Mr. Sedley burst out laughing. "They are real Indian, I assure you," said he. "Sambo, give Miss Sharp some water."

The paternal laugh was echoed by Joseph, who thought the joke capital. The ladies only smiled a little. They thought poor Rebecca suffered too much. She would have liked to choke old Sedley, but she swallowed her mortification as well as she had the abominable curry before it, and as soon as she could speak said, with a comical, good-humored air:

"I ought to have remembered the pepper which the Princess of Persia puts in the cream tarts in the *Arabian Nights*. Do you put cayenne into your cream tarts in India, sir?"

Old Sedley began to laugh, and thought Rebecca was a good-humored girl. Joseph simply said, "Cream tarts, miss? Our cream is very bad in Bengal. We generally use goats' milk, and gad, do you know I've got to prefer it!"

"You won't like *everything* from India now, Miss Sharp," said the old gentleman. But when the ladies had retired after dinner, the wily old fellow said to his son: "Have a care, Joe. That girl is setting her cap at you."

"Pooh! Nonsense!" said Joe, highly flattered.

Being an invalid, Joseph Sedley contented himself with a bottle of claret besides his Madeira at dinner, and he managed a couple of platefuls of strawberries and cream and twenty-four little rout cakes that were lying neglected in a plate near him, and certainly (for novelists have the privilege of knowing everything) he thought a great deal about the girl upstairs. "A nice, gay, merry young creature," thought he to himself. "How she looked at me when I picked up her handkerchief at dinner! She dropped it twice. Who's that singing in the drawing-room? Gad! Shall I go up and see?"

But his modesty came rushing upon him with uncontrollable force. His father was asleep, his hat was in the hall, there was a hackney-coach stand hard by in Southampton Row. "I'll go and see the *Forty Thieves*," said he, "and Miss Decamp's dance." And he slipped away gently on the pointed toes of his boots and disappeared without waking his worthy parent.

"There goes Joseph," said Amelia, who was looking from the open windows of the drawing-room while Rebecca was singing at the piano.

"Miss Sharp has frightened him away," said Mrs. Sedley. "Poor Joe, why *will* he be so shy?"

CHAPTER IV

Poor Joe's panic lasted for two or three days, during which he did not visit the house, nor during that period did Miss Rebecca ever mention his name. She was all respectful gratitude to Mrs. Sedley, delighted beyond measure at the bazaars, and in a whirl of wonder at the theater, whither the good-natured lady took her. One day Amelia had a headache and could not go upon some party of pleasure to which the two young people were invited. Nothing could induce her friend to go without her. "What! You who have shown the poor orphan what happiness and love are for the first time in her life—quit *you?* Never!" And the green eyes looked up to Heaven and filled with tears, and Mrs. Sedley could not but own that her daughter's friend had a charming kind heart of her own.

"The poor child is all heart," said Mrs. Sedley.

"I wish she could stay with us another week," said Amelia.

"She's devilish like Miss Cutler that I used to meet at Dumdum, only fairer. She's married now to Lance, the Artillery surgeon. Do you know, ma'am, that once Quintin, of the Fourteenth, bet me——"

"Oh, Joseph, we know that story," said Amelia, laughing. "Never mind about telling that, but persuade Mamma to write to Sir Somebody Crawley for leave of absence for poor dear Rebecca. Here she comes, her eyes red with weeping."

"I'm better now," said the girl, with the sweetest smile possible, taking good-natured Mrs. Sedley's extended hand and kissing it respectfully. "How kind you all are to me! All," she added, with a laugh, "except you, Mr. Joseph."

"Me!" said Joseph, meditating an instant departure. "Gracious heavens! Good gad! Miss Sharp!"

"Yes. How could you be so cruel as to make me eat that horrid pepper dish at dinner, the first day I ever saw you? You are not so good to me as dear Amelia."

"He doesn't know you so well," cried Amelia.

"I defy anybody not to be good to you, my dear," said her mother.

"The curry was capital, indeed it was," said Joe, quite gravely. "Perhaps there was *not* enough citron juice in it—no, there was *not*."

"And the chilis?"

"By Jove, how they made you cry out!" said Joe, caught by the ridicule of the circumstance and exploding in a fit of laughter which ended quite suddenly, as usual.

"I shall take care how I let *you* choose for me another time," said Rebecca as they went down again to dinner. "I didn't think men were fond of putting poor harmless girls to pain."

"By gad, Miss Rebecca, I wouldn't hurt you for the world."

"No," said she, "I *know* you wouldn't." And then she gave him ever so gentle a pressure with her little hand, and drew it back quite frightened, and looked first for one instant in his face and then down at the carpet rods. And I am not prepared to say that Joe's heart did not thump at this little involuntary, timid, gentle motion of regard on the part of the simple girl.

As if bent upon advancing Rebecca's plans in every way, what must Amelia do but remind her brother of a promise made last Easter holidays—"When I was a girl at school," said she, laughing—a promise that he, Joseph, would take her to Vauxhall. "Now," she said, "that Rebecca is with us will be the very time."

"Oh, delightful!" said Rebecca, going to clap her hands. But she recollected herself and paused like a modest creature, as she was.

"Tonight is not the night," said Joe.

"Well, tomorrow."

"Tomorrow your papa and I dine out," said Mrs. Sedley.

"You don't suppose that *I'm* going, Mrs. Sed?" said her husband. "And that a woman of your years and size is to catch cold in such an abominable damp place?"

"The children must have someone with them," cried Mrs. Sedley.

"Let Joe go," said his father, laughing. "He's *big* enough." At which speech even Mr. Sambo at the sideboard burst out laughing, and poor fat Joe felt inclined to become a parricide almost.

"Undo his stays!" continued the pitiless old gentleman. "Fling some water in his face, Miss Sharp, or carry him upstairs—the dear creature's fainting. Poor victim! Carry him up, he's as light as a feather!"

"If I stand this, sir, I'm damned!" roared Joseph.

"Order Mr. Jos's elephant, Sambo!" cried the father. "Send to Exeter 'Change, Sambo." But seeing Jos ready almost to cry with vexation, the old joker stopped his laughter and said, holding out his hand to his son: "It's all fair on the Stock Exchange, Jos—and, Sambo, never mind the elephant, but

give me and Mr. Jos a glass of champagne. Boney himself hasn't got such in his cellar, my boy!"

A goblet of champagne restored Joseph's equanimity, and before the bottle was emptied—of which, as an invalid, he took two-thirds—he had agreed to take the young ladies to Vauxhall.

"The girls must have a gentleman apiece," said the old gentleman. "Jos will be sure to leave Emmy in the crowd, he will be so taken up with Miss Sharp here. Send to 96 and ask George Osborne if he'll come."

At this, I don't know in the least for what reason, Mrs. Sedley looked at her husband and laughed. Mr. Sedley's eyes twinkled in a manner indescribably roguish, and he looked at Amelia; and Amelia, hanging down her head, blushed as only young ladies of seventeen know how to blush and as Miss Rebecca Sharp never blushed in her life—at least not since she was eight years old and when she was caught stealing jam out of a cupboard by her godmother. "Amelia had better write a note," said her father, "and let George Osborne see what a beautiful handwriting we have brought back from Miss Pinkerton's. Do you remember when you wrote to him to come on Twelfthnight, Emmy, and spelled twelfth without the f?"

"That was years ago," said Amelia.

"It seems like yesterday, don't it, John?" said Mrs. Sedley to her husband. And that night, in a conversation which took place in a front room in the second floor, Mrs. Sedley took her husband to task for his cruel conduct to poor Joe.

"It was quite wicked of you, Mr. Sedley," said she, "to torment the poor boy so."

"My dear, Jos is a great deal vainer than you ever were in your life, and that's saying a good deal. Though some thirty years ago, in the year seventeen hundred and eighty—what was it?—perhaps you had a right to be vain. I don't say no. But I've no patience with Jos and his dandified modesty. It is out-Josephing Joseph, my dear, and all the while the boy is only thinking of himself, and what a fine fellow he is. I doubt, ma'am, we shall have some trouble with him yet. Here is Emmy's little friend making love to him as hard as she can, that's quite clear, and if she does not catch him, some other will. That man is destined to be a prey to woman, as I am to go on 'Change every day. It's a mercy he did not bring us over a black daughter-in-law, my dear. But, mark my words, the first woman who fishes for him hooks him."

"She shall go off tomorrow, the little artful creature," said Mrs. Sedley with great energy.

"Why not she as well as another, Mrs. Sedley? The girl's a white face at any rate. *I* don't care who marries him. Let Joe please himself."

When morning came the good-natured Mrs. Sedley no longer thought of executing her threats with regard to Miss Sharp; for though nothing is more keen, nor more common, nor more justifiable, than maternal jealousy, yet she could not bring herself to suppose that the little, humble, grateful, gentle governess would dare to look up to such a magnificent personage as the Collector of Boggley Wollah. The petition, too, for an extension of the young lady's

leave of absence had already been dispatched, and it would be difficult to find a pretext for abruptly dismissing her.

And as if all things conspired in favor of the gentle Rebecca, the very elements interposed to aid her. For on the evening appointed for the Vauxhall party, George Osborne having come to dinner and the elders of the house having departed, according to invitation, to dine with Alderman Balls at Highbury Barn, there came on such a thunderstorm as only happens on Vauxhall nights, and as obliged the young people perforce to remain at home. Mr. Osborne did not seem in the least disappointed at this occurrence. He and Joseph Sedley drank a fitting quantity of port wine tête-à-tête in the dining-room, during the drinking of which Sedley told a number of his best Indian stories, for he was extremely talkative in man's society. And afterward Miss Amelia Sedley did the honors of the drawing-room, and these four young persons passed such a comfortable evening together that they declared they were rather glad of the thunderstorm than otherwise which had caused them to put off their visit to Vauxhall.

Osborne was Sedley's godson, and had been one of the family any time these three and twenty years. At six weeks old he had received from John Sedley a present of a silver cup, at six months old, a coral with gold whistle and bells. From his youth upward he was "tipped" regularly by the old gentleman at Christmas. And on going back to school, he remembered perfectly well being thrashed by Joseph Sedley when the latter was a big, swaggering hobbledehoy and George an impudent urchin of ten years old. In a word, George was as familiar with the family as such daily acts of kindness and intercourse could make him.

"Do you remember, Sedley, what a fury you were in when I cut off the tassels of your Hessian boots, and how Miss—hem!—how Amelia rescued me from a beating by falling down on her knees and crying out to her brother Jos not to beat little George?"

Jos remembered this remarkable circumstance perfectly well, but vowed that he had totally forgotten it.

"Well, do you remember coming down in a gig to Dr. Swishtail's to see me before you went to India, and giving me half a guinea and a pat on the head? I always had an idea that you were at least seven feet high, and was quite astonished at your return from India to find you no taller than myself."

"How good of Mr. Sedley to go to your school and give you the money!" exclaimed Rebecca, in accents of extreme delight.

"Yes, and after I had cut the tassels of his boots too. Boys never forget those tips at school, nor the givers."

"I delight in Hessian boots," said Rebecca. Jos Sedley, who admired his own legs prodigiously and always wore this ornamental chaussure, was extremely pleased at this remark, though he drew his legs under his chair as it was made.

"Miss Sharp," said George Osborne, "you who are so clever an artist, you must make a grand historical picture of the scene of the boots. Sedley shall be represented in buckskins and holding one of the injured boots in one hand; by the other he shall have hold of my shirt frill. Amelia shall be kneeling near

him, with her little hands up, and the picture shall have a grand allegorical title, as the frontispieces have in the *Medulla* and the spelling book."

"I sha'n't have time to do it here," said Rebecca. "I'll do it when—when I'm gone." And she dropped her voice, and looked so sad and piteous that everybody felt how cruel her lot was, and how sorry they would be to part with her.

"Oh, that you could stay longer, dear Rebecca!" said Amelia.

"Why?" answered the other, still more sadly. "That I may be only the more unhap—unwilling to lose you?" And she turned away her head. Amelia began to give way to that natural infirmity of tears which, as we have said, was one of the defects of this silly little thing. George Osborne looked at the two young women with a touched curiosity, and Joseph Sedley heaved something very like a sigh out of his big chest as he cast his eyes down toward his favorite Hessian boots.

"Let us have some music, Miss Sedley—Amelia," said George, who felt at that moment an extraordinary, almost irresistible impulse to seize the abovementioned young woman in his arms and to kiss her in the face of the company. And she looked at him for a moment, and if I should say that they fell in love with each other at that single instant of time I should perhaps be telling an untruth, for the fact is that these two young people had been bred up by their parents for this very purpose, and their banns had, as it were, been read in their respective families any time these ten years. They went off to the piano, which was situated, as pianos usually are, in the back drawing-room. And as it was rather dark, Miss Amelia, in the most unaffected way in the world, put her hand into Mr. Osborne's, who of course could see the way among the chairs and ottomans a great deal better than she could. But this arrangement left Mr. Joseph Sedley tête-à-tête with Rebecca at the drawing-room table, where the latter was occupied in knitting a green-silk purse.

"There is no need to ask family secrets," said Miss Sharp. "Those two have told theirs."

"As soon as he gets his company," said Joseph, "I believe the affair is settled. George Osborne is a capital fellow."

"And your sister the dearest creature in the world," said Rebecca. "Happy the man who wins her!" With this Miss Sharp gave a great sigh.

Almost for the first time in his life Mr. Sedley found himself talking without the least timidity or hesitation to a person of the other sex. Miss Rebecca asked him a great number of questions about India, which gave him an opportunity of narrating many interesting anecdotes about that country and himself. He described the balls at Government House, and the manner in which they kept themselves cool in the hot weather, with punkahs, tatties, and other contrivances. And then he described a tiger hunt, and the manner in which the mahout of his elephant had been pulled off his seat by one of the infuriated animals. How delighted Miss Rebecca was at the Government balls; and how frightened she was at the story of the elephant! "For your mother's sake, dear Mr. Sedley," she said, "for the sake of all your friends, promise *never* to go on one of those horrid expeditions."

"Pooh, pooh, Miss Sharp," said he, pulling up his shirt collars. "The danger

makes the sport only the pleasanter." He had never been but once at a tiger hunt, when the accident in question occurred and when he was half killed—not by the tiger, but by the fright. And as he talked on, he grew quite bold, and actually had the audacity to ask Miss Rebecca for whom she was knitting the green-silk purse. He was quite surprised and delighted at his own graceful, familiar manner.

"For anyone who wants a purse," replied Miss Rebecca, looking at him in the most gentle, winning way. Sedley was going to make one of the most eloquent speeches possible and had begun, "Oh, Miss Sharp, how——" when some song which was performed in the other room came to an end and caused him to hear his own voice so distinctly that he stopped, blushed, and blew his nose in great agitation.

"Did you ever hear anything like your brother's eloquence?" whispered Mr. Osborne to Amelia. "Why, your friend has worked miracles."

"The more the better," said Miss Amelia, who like almost all women who are worth a pin was a matchmaker in her heart, and would have been delighted that Joseph should carry back a wife to India. She had, too, in the course of these few days' constant intercourse, warmed into a most tender friendship for Rebecca, and discovered a million of virtues and amiable qualities in her which she had not perceived when they were at Chiswick together. Having expended her little store of songs, or having stayed long enough in the back drawing-room, it now appeared proper to Miss Amelia to ask her friend to sing.

"You would not have listened to me," she said to Mr. Osborne (though she knew she was telling a fib) "had you heard Rebecca first."

"I give Miss Sharp warning, though," said Osborne, "that, right or wrong, I consider Miss Amelia Sedley the first singer in the world."

"You shall hear," said Amelia, and Joseph Sedley was actually polite enough to carry the candles to the piano. Osborne hinted that he should like quite as well to sit in the dark; but Miss Sedley, laughing, declined to bear him company any farther, and the two accordingly followed Mr. Joseph. Rebecca sang far better than her friend, and exerted herself to the utmost, and indeed to the wonder of Amelia, who had never known her perform so well. She sang a French song, which Joseph did not understand in the least and which George confessed he did not understand, and then a number of those simple ballads which were the fashion forty years ago, and in which British tars, our King, poor Susan, blue-eyed Mary, and the like were the principal themes. They are not, it is said, very brilliant in a musical point of view, but contain numberless good-natured, simple appeals to the affections, which people understood better than the milk-and-water *lagrime*, *sospiri*, and *felicità* of the eternal Donizettian music with which we are favored nowadays.

Among these ditties was one, the last of the concert, and to the following effect:

Ah! bleak and barren was the moor,
Ah! loud and piercing was the storm,
The cottage roof was sheltered sure,
The cottage hearth was bright and warm—

An orphan boy the lattice passed,
And as he marked its cheerful glow,
Felt doubly keen the midnight blast,
And doubly cold the fallen snow.

They marked him as he onward pressed,
With fainting heart and weary limb;
Kind voices bade him turn and rest,
And gentle faces welcomed him.
The dawn is up—the guest is gone,
The cottage hearth is blazing still.
Heaven pity all poor wanderers lone!
Hark to the wind upon the hill!

It was the sentiment of the before-mentioned words, "When I'm gone," over again. As she came to the last words, Miss Sharp's "deep-toned voice faltered." Everybody felt the allusion to her departure, and to her hapless orphan state. Joseph Sedley, who was fond of music, and softhearted, was in a state of ravishment during the performance of the song and profoundly touched at its conclusion. If he had had the courage, if George and Miss Sedley had remained, according to the former's proposal, in the farther room, Joseph Sedley's bachelorhood would have been at an end, and this work would never have been written. But at the close of the ditty Rebecca quitted the piano, and giving her hand to Amelia, walked away into the front drawing-room twilight; and at this moment Mr. Sambo made his appearance with a tray containing sandwiches, jellies, and some glittering glasses and decanters, on which Joseph Sedley's attention was immediately fixed. When the parents of the house of Sedley returned from their dinner party, they found the young people so busy in talking that they had not heard the arrival of the carriage, and Mr. Joseph was in the act of saying, "My dear Miss Sharp, one little teaspoonful of jelly to recruit you after your immense—your—your *delightful* exertions."

"Bravo, Jos!" said Mr. Sedley. On hearing the bantering of which well-known voice, Jos instantly relapsed into an alarmed silence, and quickly took his departure. He did not lie awake all night thinking whether or not he was in love with Miss Sharp—the passion of love never interfered with the appetite or the slumber of Mr. Joseph Sedley—but he thought to himself how delightful it would be to hear such songs as those after cutcherry—what a distinguée girl she was—how she could speak French better than the Governor General's lady herself—and what a sensation she would make at the Calcutta balls! "It's evident the poor devil's in love with me," thought he. "She is just as rich as most of the girls who come out to India. I might go farther and fare worse, egad!" And in these meditations he fell asleep.

How Miss Sharp lay awake, thinking "Will he come or not tomorrow?" need not be told here. Tomorrow came, and, as sure as fate, Mr. Joseph Sedley made his appearance before luncheon. He had never been known before to confer such an honor on Russell Square. George Osborne was somehow there

already, and Rebecca was employed upon her yesterday's work. As Joe's buggy drove up and while, after his usual thundering knock and pompous bustle at the door, the ex-Collector of Boggley Wollah labored upstairs to the drawing-room, knowing glances were telegraphed between Osborne and Miss Sedley, and the pair, smiling archly, looked at Rebecca, who actually blushed as she bent her fair ringlets over her knitting. How her heart beat as Joseph appeared—Joseph puffing from the staircase in shining creaking boots—Joseph in a new waistcoat, red with heat and nervousness, and blushing behind his wadded neckcloth. It was a nervous moment for all, and as for Amelia, I think she was more frightened than even the people most concerned.

Sambo, who flung open the door and announced Mr. Joseph, followed grinning in the Collector's rear and bearing two handsome nosegays of flowers, which the monster had actually had the gallantry to purchase in Covent Garden market that morning. They were not as big as the haystacks which ladies carry about with them nowadays in cones of filigree paper, but the young women were delighted with the gift as Joseph presented one to each, with an exceedingly solemn bow.

"Bravo, Jos!" cried Osborne.

"Thank you, dear Joseph," said Amelia, quite ready to kiss her brother if he were so minded.

"Oh, heavenly, heavenly flowers!" exclaimed Miss Sharp, and smelled them delicately, and held them to her bosom, and cast up her eyes to the ceiling in an ecstasy of admiration. Perhaps she just looked first into the bouquet to see whether there was a billet-doux hidden among the flowers, but there was no letter.

"Do they talk the language of flowers at Boggley Wollah, Sedley?" asked Osborne, laughing.

"Pooh, nonsense!" replied the sentimental youth. "Bought 'em at Nathan's. Very glad you like 'em. And eh, Amelia, my dear, I bought a pineapple at the same time, which I gave to Sambo. Let's have it for tiffin, very cool and nice this hot weather." Rebecca said she had never tasted a pine and longed beyond everything to taste one.

So the conversation went on. I don't know on what pretext Osborne left the room, or why, presently, Amelia went away—perhaps to superintend the slicing of the pineapple; but Jos was left alone with Rebecca, who had resumed her work, and the green silk and the shining needles were quivering rapidly under her white slender fingers.

"What a beautiful, *byoo-ootiful* song that was you sang last night, dear Miss Sharp," said the Collector. "It made me cry almost, 'pon my honor it did."

"Because you have a kind heart, Mr. Joseph. All the Sedleys have, I think."

"It kept me awake last night, and I was trying to hum it this morning in bed. I was, upon my honor. Gollop, my doctor, came in at eleven (for I'm a sad invalid, you know, and see Gollop every day), and gad! there was I singing away like—a robin."

"Oh, you droll creature! Do let me hear you sing it."

"Me? No, you, Miss Sharp. My dear Miss Sharp, do sing it."

"Not now, Mr. Sedley," said Rebecca, with a sigh. "My spirits are not equal to it, besides, I must finish the purse. Will you help me, Mr. Sedley?" And before he had time to ask how, Mr. Joseph Sedley, of the East India Company's service, was actually seated tête-à-tête with a young lady looking at her with a most killing expression, his arms stretched out before her in an imploring attitude, and his hands bound in a web of green silk, which she was unwinding.

In this romantic position Osborne and Amelia found the interesting pair when they entered to announce that tiffin was ready. The skein of silk was just wound round the card, but Mr. Jos had never spoken.

"I am sure he will tonight, dear," Amelia said as she pressed Rebecca's hand, and Sedley too had communed with his soul and said to himself, "Gad, I'll pop the question at Vauxhall."

Lieutenant Osborne, when coming to Russell Square on the day of the Vauxhall party, said to the ladies: "Mrs. Sedley, ma'am, I hope you have room. I've asked Dobbin of Ours to come and dine here and go with us to Vauxhall. He's almost as modest as Jos."

"Modesty! Pooh," said the stout gentleman, casting a *vainqueur* look at Miss Sharp.

"He is—but you are incomparably more graceful, Sedley," Osborne added, laughing. "I met him at the Bedford when I went to look for you; and I told him that Miss Amelia was come home and that we were all bent on going out for a night's pleasuring; and that Mrs. Sedley had forgiven his breaking the punch bowl at the child's party. Don't you remember the catastrophe, ma'am, seven years ago?"

"Over Mrs. Flamingo's crimson silk gown," said good-natured Mrs. Sedley. "What a gawky it was! And his sisters are not much more graceful. Lady Dobbin was at Highbury last night with three of them. Such figures, my dears!"

That evening, when Amelia came tripping into the drawing-room in a white muslin frock, prepared for conquest at Vauxhall, singing like a lark and as fresh as a rose, a very tall, ungainly gentleman with large hands and feet, and large ears set off by a closely cropped head of black hair, and in the hideous military frogged coat and cocked hat of those times, advanced to meet her, and made her one of the clumsiest bows that was ever performed by a mortal.

This was no other than Captain William Dobbin, of His Majesty's ——th Regiment of Foot, returned from yellow fever in the West Indies, to which the fortune of the service had ordered his regiment while so many of his gallant comrades were reaping glory in the Peninsula.

He had arrived with a knock so very timid and quiet that it was inaudible to the ladies upstairs; otherwise, you may be sure Miss Amelia would never have been so bold as to come singing into the room. As it was, the sweet fresh little voice went right into the Captain's heart, and nestled there. When she held out her hand for him to shake, before he enveloped it in his own he paused and thought: "Well, is it possible—are you the little maid I remember in the pink frock such a short time ago—the night I upset the punch bowl, just after I was gazetted? Are you the little girl that George Osborne said should marry him? What a blooming young creature you seem, and what a prize

the rogue has got!" All this he thought before he took Amelia's hand into his own and as he let his cocked hat fall.

So these worthy people sat down to dinner presently. They talked about war and glory, and Boney and Lord Wellington, and the last *Gazette*. In those famous days every *Gazette* had a victory in it, and the two gallant young men longed to see their own names in the glorious list, and cursed their unlucky fate to belong to a regiment which had been away from the chances of honor. Miss Sharp kindled with this exciting talk, but Miss Sedley trembled and grew quite faint as she heard it. Mr. Jos told several of his tiger-hunting stories, helped Rebecca to everything on the table, and himself gobbled and drank a great deal.

He sprang to open the door for the ladies when they retired, with the most killing grace, and coming back to the table, filled himself bumper after bumper of claret, which he swallowed with nervous rapidity.

"He's priming himself," Osborne whispered to Dobbin, and at length the hour and the carriage arrived for Vauxhall.

CHAPTER V

Let us step into the coach with the Russell Square party and be off to the Gardens. There is barely room between Jos and Miss Sharp, who are on the front seat, Mr. Osborne sitting bodkin opposite between Captain Dobbin and Amelia.

Every soul in the coach agreed that on that night Jos would propose to make Rebecca Sharp Mrs. Sedley. The parents at home had acquiesced in the arrangement, though, between ourselves, old Mr. Sedley had a feeling very much akin to contempt for his son. He said he was vain, selfish, lazy, and effeminate. He could not endure his airs as a man of fashion and laughed heartily at his pompous braggadocio stories.

Amelia, on the other hand, as became a young woman of her prudence and temperament, was quite enthusiastic for the match. Once or twice Jos had been on the point of saying something very important to her, to which she was most willing to lend an ear, but the fat fellow could not be brought to unbosom himself of his great secret, and very much to his sister's disappointment he only rid himself of a large sigh and turned away.

It was of course Mrs. Sedley's opinion that her son would demean himself by a marriage with an artist's daughter. "But, lor', ma'am," ejaculated Mrs. Blenkinsop, the housekeeper, "we was only grocers when we married Mr. S, who was a stockbroker's clerk, and we hadn't five hundred pounds among us, and we're rich enough now." And Amelia was entirely of this opinion, to which, gradually, the good-natured Mrs. Sedley was brought.

Mr. Sedley was neutral. "Let Jos marry whom he likes," he said. "It's no affair of mine. This girl has no fortune; no more had Mrs. Sedley. She seems good-humored and clever, and will keep him in order, perhaps. Better she,

my dear, than a black Mrs. Sedley and a dozen of mahogany grandchildren."

So that everything seemed to smile upon Rebecca's fortunes. She took Jos's arm as a matter of course on going to dinner. She had sat by him on the box of his open carriage (a most tremendous "buck" he was, as he sat there, serene, in state, driving his grays), and though nobody said a word on the subject of the marriage, everybody seemed to understand it. All she wanted was the proposal, and ah! how Rebecca now felt the want of a mother!—a dear, tender mother, who would have managed the business in ten minutes, and in the course of a little delicate confidential conversation would have extracted the interesting avowal from the bashful lips of the young man!

Such was the state of affairs as the carriage crossed Westminster Bridge.

The party was landed at the Royal Gardens in due time. As the majestic Jos stepped out of the creaking vehicle the crowd gave a cheer for the fat gentleman, who blushed and looked very big and mighty as he walked away with Rebecca under his arm. George, of course, took charge of Amelia. She looked as happy as a rose tree in sunshine.

"I say, Dobbin," says George, "just look to the shawls and things, there's a good fellow." And so while he paired off with Miss Sedley, and Jos squeezed through the gate into the Gardens with Rebecca at his side, honest Dobbin contented himself by giving an arm to the shawls and by paying at the door for the whole party.

He walked very modestly behind them. He was not willing to spoil sport. About Rebecca and Jos he did not care a fig. But he thought Amelia worthy even of the brilliant George Osborne, and as he saw that good-looking couple threading the walks, to the girl's delight and wonder, he watched her artless happiness with a sort of fatherly pleasure. Perhaps he felt that he would have liked to have something on his own arm besides a shawl, but William Dobbin was very little addicted to selfish calculations at all, and so long as his friend was enjoying himself, how should he be discontented? And the truth is that of all the delights of the Gardens—of the hundred thousand *extra* lamps, which were always lighted; the fiddlers in cocked hats, who played ravishing melodies under the gilded cockleshell in the midst of the Gardens; the singers, both of comic and sentimental ballads, who charmed the ears there; the country dances, formed by bouncing cockneys and cockneyesses and executed amid jumping, thumping, and laughter; the signal which announced that Madame Saqui was about to mount skyward on a slack rope ascending to the stars; the hermit that always sat in the illuminated hermitage; the dark walks, so favorable to the interviews of young lovers; the pots of stout handed about by the people in the shabby old liveries; and the twinkling boxes in which the happy feasters made believe to eat slices of almost invisible ham—of all these things Captain William Dobbin did not take the slightest notice.

He carried about Amelia's white Cashmere shawl, and having attended under the gilt cockleshell while Mrs. Salmon performed the "Battle of Borodino" (a savage cantata against the Corsican upstart, who had lately met with his Russian reverses), Mr. Dobbin tried to hum it as he walked away, and found he was humming the tune which Amelia Sedley sang on the stairs as she came down

to dinner. He burst out laughing at himself, for the truth is he could sing no better than an owl.

What were the adventures of Mr. Osborne and Miss Amelia? That is a secret. But be sure of this—they were perfectly happy, and correct in their behavior, and as they had been in the habit of being together any time these fifteen years, their tête-à-tête offered no particular novelty.

But when Miss Rebecca Sharp and her stout companion lost themselves in a solitary walk in which there were not above fivescore more of couples similarly straying, they both felt that the situation was extremely tender and critical; and now or never was the moment, Miss Sharp thought, to provoke that declaration which was trembling on the timid lips of Mr. Sedley. They had previously been to the panorama of Moscow, where a rude fellow, treading on Miss Sharp's foot, caused her to fall back with a little shriek into the arms of Mr. Sedley, and this little incident increased the tenderness and confidence of that gentleman to such a degree that he told her several of his favorite Indian stories over again for at least the sixth time.

"How I should like to see India!" said Rebecca.

"*Should* you?" said Joseph with a most killing tenderness, and was no doubt about to follow up this artful interrogatory by a question still more tender (for he puffed and panted a great deal, and Rebecca's hand, which was placed near his heart, could count the feverish pulsations of that organ) when oh, provoking! the bell rang for the fireworks and, great scuffling and running taking place, these interesting lovers were obliged to follow in the stream of people.

Captain Dobbin had some thoughts of joining the party at supper, as in truth he found the Vauxhall amusements not particularly lively. But he paraded twice before the box where the now united couples were met and nobody took any notice of him. Covers were laid for four. The mated pairs were prattling away quite happily, and Dobbin knew he was as clean forgotten as if he had never existed in this world.

"I should only be de trop," said the Captain, looking at them rather wistfully. "I'd best go and talk to the hermit." And so he strolled off out of the hum of men, and noise and clatter of the banquet, into the dark walk at the end of which lived that well-known pasteboard solitary. It wasn't very good fun for Dobbin.

The two couples were perfectly happy, then, in their box, where the most delightful and intimate conversation took place. Jos was in his glory, ordering about the waiters with great majesty. He made the salad, and uncorked the champagne, and carved the chickens, and ate and drank the greater part of the refreshments on the tables. Finally, he insisted upon having a bowl of rack punch—everybody had rack punch at Vauxhall. "Waiter, rack punch."

That bowl of rack punch was the cause of all this history. And why not a bowl of rack punch as well as any other cause? Was not a bowl of prussic acid the cause of fair Rosamond's retiring from the world? Was not a bowl of wine the cause of the demise of Alexander the Great, or at least does not Dr. Lemprière say so? So did this bowl of rack punch influence the fates of

all the principal characters in this *Novel without a Hero* which we are now relating. It influenced their life, although most of them did not taste a drop of it.

The young ladies did not drink it, Osborne did not like it, and the consequence was that Jos, that fat gourmand, drank up the whole contents of the bowl. And the consequence of his drinking up the whole contents of the bowl was a liveliness which at first was astonishing, and then became almost painful, for he talked and laughed so loud as to bring scores of listeners round the box, much to the confusion of the innocent party within it. And, volunteering to sing a song (which he did in that maudlin high key peculiar to gentlemen in an inebriated state), he almost drew away the audience who were gathered round the musicians in the gilt scallop shell, and received from his hearers a great deal of applause.

"Brayvo, fat un!" said one. "Angcore, Daniel Lambert!" said another. "What a figure for the tightrope!" exclaimed another wag, to the inexpressible alarm of the ladies and the great anger of Mr. Osborne.

"For heaven's sake, Jos, let us get up and go!" cried that gentleman, and the young women rose.

"Stop, my dearest diddle-diddle-darling," shouted Jos, now as bold as a lion and clasping Miss Rebecca round the waist. Rebecca started, but she could not get away her hand. The laughter outside redoubled. Jos continued to drink, to make love, and to sing, and, winking and waving his glass gracefully to his audience, challenged all or any to come in and take a share of his punch.

Mr. Osborne was just on the point of knocking down a gentleman in top boots who proposed to take advantage of this invitation, and a commotion seemed to be inevitable, when by the greatest good luck a gentleman of the name of Dobbin, who had been walking about the Gardens, stepped up to the box. "Be off, you fools!" said this gentleman, shouldering off a great number of the crowd, who vanished presently before his cocked hat and fierce appearance, and he entered the box in a most agitated state.

"Good heavens! Dobbin, where *have* you been?" Osborne said, seizing the white Cashmere shawl from his friend's arm and huddling up Amelia in it. "Make yourself useful, and take charge of Jos here while I take the ladies to the carriage."

Jos was for rising to interfere, but a single push from Osborne's finger sent him puffing back into his seat again, and the Lieutenant was enabled to remove the ladies in safety. Jos kissed his hand to them as they retreated, and hiccupped out, "Bless you, bless you!" Then, seizing Captain Dobbin's hand and weeping in the most pitiful way, he confided to that gentleman the secret of his loves. He adored that girl who had just gone out; he had broken her heart, he knew he had, by his conduct; he would marry her next morning at St. George's, Hanover Square; he'd knock up the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth, he would, by Jove! and have him in readiness. And, acting on this hint, Captain Dobbin shrewdly induced him to leave the Gardens and hasten to Lambeth Place, and when once out of the gates, easily conveyed Mr. Jos Sedley into a hackney coach which deposited him safely at his lodgings.

George Osborne conducted the girls home in safety, and when the door was closed upon them and as he walked across Russell Square, laughed so as to astonish the watchman. Amelia looked very ruefully at her friend as they went upstairs, and kissed her, and went to bed without any more talking.

"He must propose tomorrow," thought Rebecca. "He called me his soul's darling, four times, he squeezed my hand in Amelia's presence. He must propose tomorrow." And so thought Amelia too.

That next morning, which Rebecca thought was to dawn upon her fortune, found Sedley groaning in agonies which the pen refuses to describe. Soda water was not invented yet. Small beer—will it be believed!—was the only drink with which unhappy gentlemen soothed the fever of their previous night's potation. With this mild beverage before him, George Osborne found the ex-Collector of Boggley Wollah groaning on the sofa at his lodgings. Dobbin was already in the room, good-naturedly tending his patient of the night before. The two officers, looking at the prostrate Bacchanalian and askance at each other, exchanged the most frightful sympathetic grins. Even Sedley's valet, the most solemn and correct of gentlemen, with the muteness and gravity of an undertaker, could hardly keep his countenance in order as he looked at his unfortunate master.

"Mr. Sedley was uncommon wild last night, sir," he whispered in confidence to Osborne as the latter mounted the stair. "He wanted to fight the 'ackney coachman, sir. The Capting was obliged to bring him upstairs in his arms like a babby." A momentary smile flickered over Mr. Brush's features as he spoke. Instantly, however, they relapsed into their usual unfathomable calm as he flung open the drawing-room door and announced "Mr. Hosbin."

"How are you, Sedley?" that young wag began, after surveying his victim. "No bones broken? There's a hackney coachman downstairs, with a black eye and a tied-up head, vowing he'll have the law of you."

"What do you mean—law?" Sedley faintly asked.

"For thrashing him last night—didn't he, Dobbin? You hit out, sir, like Molyneux. The watchman says he never saw a fellow go down so straight. Ask Dobbin."

"You *did* have a round with the coachman," Captain Dobbin said, "and showed plenty of fight, too."

"And that fellow with the white coat at Vauxhall! How Jos drove at him! How the women screamed! By Jove, sir, it did my heart good to see you. I thought you civilians had no pluck, but *I'll* never get in your way when you are in your cups, Jos."

"I believe I'm very terrible when I'm roused," ejaculated Jos from the sofa, and made a grimace so dreary and ludicrous that the Captain's politeness could restrain him no longer, and he and Osborne fired off a ringing volley of laughter.

Osborne pursued his advantage pitilessly. He thought Jos a milksop. He had been revolving in his mind the marriage question pending between Jos and Rebecca, and was not overwell pleased that a member of a family into which

he, George Osborne of the —th, was going to marry should make a mésalliance with a little nobody—a little upstart governess. "You hit, you poor old fellow!" said Osborne. "You terrible! Why, man, you couldn't stand—you made everybody laugh in the Gardens, though you were crying yourself. You were maudlin, Jos. Don't you remember singing a song?"

"A what?" Jos asked.

"A sentimental song, and calling Rosa, Rebecca, what's her name—Amelia's little friend—your dearest diddle-diddle-darling?" And this ruthless young fellow, seizing hold of Dobbin's hand, acted over the scene, to the horror of the original performer and in spite of Dobbin's good-natured entreaties to him to have mercy.

"Why should I spare him?" Osborne said to his friend's remonstrances when they quitted the invalid, leaving him under the hands of Dr. Gollop. "What the deuce right has he to give himself his patronizing airs and make fools of us at Vauxhall? Who's this little schoolgirl that is ogling and making love to him? Hang it, the family's low enough already without *her*. A governess is all very well, but I'd rather have a lady for my sister-in-law. I'm a liberal man, but I've proper pride and know my own station. Let her know hers. And I'll take down that great hectoring nabob, and prevent him from being made a greater fool than he is. That's why I told him to look out, lest she brought an action against him."

"I suppose you know best," Dobbin said, though rather dubiously. "You always were a Tory, and your family's one of the oldest in England. But——"

"Come and see the girls, and make love to Miss Sharp yourself," the Lieutenant here interrupted his friend, but Captain Dobbin declined to join Osborne in his daily visit to the young ladies in Russell Square.

As George walked down Southampton Row from Holborn, he laughed as he saw at the Sedley mansion, in two different stories, two heads on the lookout. The fact is, Miss Amelia, in the drawing-room balcony, was looking very eagerly toward the opposite side of the square, where Mr. Osborne dwelt, on the watch for the Lieutenant himself. And Miss Sharp, from her little bedroom on the second floor, was in observation until Mr. Joseph's great form should heave in sight.

"Sister Anne is on the watchtower," said he to Amelia, "but there's nobody coming." And laughing and enjoying the joke hugely, he described in the most ludicrous terms to Miss Sedley the dismal condition of her brother.

"I think it's very cruel of you to laugh, George," she said, looking particularly unhappy. But George only laughed the more at her piteous and discomfited mien, persisted in thinking the joke a most diverting one, and when Miss Sharp came downstairs bantered her with a great deal of liveliness upon the effect of her charms on the fat civilian.

"Oh, Miss Sharp, if you could but see him this morning," he said, "moaning in his flowered dressing gown, writhing on his sofa—if you could but have seen him lolling out his tongue to Gollop the apothecary!"

"See whom?" said Miss Sharp.

"Whom? Oh, whom? Captain Dobbin, of course, to whom we were all so attentive, by-the-way, last night."

"We were very unkind to him," Emmy said, blushing very much. "I—I quite forgot him."

"Of course you did," cried Osborne, still on the laugh. "One can't be *always* thinking about Dobbin, you know, Amelia. Can one, Miss Sharp?"

"Except when he overset the glass of wine at dinner," Miss Sharp said with a haughty air and a toss of the head, "I never gave the existence of Captain Dobbin one single moment's consideration."

"Very good, Miss Sharp, I'll tell him," Osborne said. And as he spoke Miss Sharp began to have a feeling of distrust and hatred toward this young officer, which he was quite unconscious of having inspired. "*He* is to make fun of me, is he?" thought Rebecca. "Has he been laughing about me to Joseph? Has he frightened him? Perhaps he won't come." A film passed over her eyes and her heart beat quite quick.

"You're always joking," said she, smiling as innocently as she could. "Joke away, Mr. George, there's nobody to defend *me*." And George Osborne, as she walked away and Amelia looked reprovingly at him, felt some little manly compunction for having inflicted any unnecessary unkindness upon this helpless creature. "My dearest Amelia," said he, "you are too good—too kind. You don't know the world. I do. And your little friend Miss Sharp must learn her station."

"Don't you think Jos will——"

"Upon my word, my dear, I don't know. He may or may not. I'm not his master. I only know he is a very foolish, vain fellow, and put my dear little girl into a very painful and awkward position last night. My dearest diddle-diddle-darling!" He was off laughing again, and he did it so drolly that Emmy laughed too.

All that day Jos never came. But Amelia had no fear about this; for the little schemer had actually sent away the page, Mr. Sambo's aide-de-camp, to Mr. Joseph's lodgings to ask for some book he had promised, and how he was; and the reply through Jos's man, Mr. Brush, was that his master was ill in bed, and had just had the doctor with him. He must come tomorrow, she thought, but she never had the courage to speak a word on the subject to Rebecca, nor did that young woman herself allude to it in any way during the whole evening after the night at Vauxhall.

The next day, however, as the two young ladies sate on the sofa pretending to work, or to write letters, or to read novels, Sambo came into the room with his usual engaging grin, with a packet under his arm and a note on the tray. "Note from Mr. Jos, miss," says Sambo.

How Amelia trembled as she opened it!

So it ran:

Dear Amelia: I send you the *Orphan of the Forest*. I was too ill to come yesterday. I leave town today for Cheltenham. Pray excuse me, if you can. to the amiable Miss Sharp for my conduct at Vauxhall, and entreat her

to pardon and forget every word I may have uttered when excited by that fatal supper. As soon as I have recovered, for my health is very much shaken, I shall go to Scotland for some months, and am

Truly yours, Jos. Sedley

It was the death warrant. All was over. Amelia did not care to look at Rebecca's pale face and burning eyes, but she dropped the letter into her friend's lap, and got up and went upstairs to her room, and cried her little heart out.

It now became clear to every soul in the house, except poor Amelia, that Rebecca should take her departure, and high and low (always with the one exception) agreed that that event should take place as speedily as possible. Our good child ransacked all her drawers, cupboards, reticules, and gimcrack boxes—passed in review all her gowns, fichus, tags, bobbins, laces, silk stockings, and fallals—selecting this thing and that and the other, to make a little heap for Rebecca. And going to her papa—that generous British merchant, who had promised to give her as many guineas as she was years old—she begged the old gentleman to give the money to dear Rebecca, who must want it, while she lacked for nothing.

She even made George Osborne contribute, and nothing loath (for he was as free-handed a young fellow as any in the army), he went to Bond Street and bought the best hat and spencer that money could buy.

"That's George's present to you, Rebecca, dear," said Amelia, quite proud of the bandbox conveying these gifts. "What a taste he has! There's nobody like him."

"Nobody," Rebecca answered. "How thankful I am to him!" She was thinking in her heart, "It was George Osborne who prevented my marriage." And she loved George Osborne accordingly.

She made her preparations for departure with great equanimity, and accepted all the kind little Amelia's presents, after just the proper degree of hesitation and reluctance. She vowed eternal gratitude to Mrs. Sedley, of course, but did not intrude herself upon that good lady too much, who was embarrassed and evidently wishing to avoid her. She kissed Mr. Sedley's hand when he presented her with the purse, and asked permission to consider him for the future as her kind, kind friend and protector. Her behavior was so affecting that he was going to write her a check for twenty pounds more, but he restrained his feelings. The carriage was in waiting to take him to dinner, so he tripped away with a "God bless you, my dear. Always come here when you come to town, you know. Drive to the Mansion House, James."

Finally came the parting with Miss Amelia, over which picture I intend to throw a veil. But after a scene in which one person was in earnest and the other a perfect performer—after the tenderest caresses, the most pathetic tears, the smelling bottle, and some of the very best feelings of the heart had been called into requisition—Rebecca and Amelia parted, the former vowing to love her friend forever and ever and ever.

CHAPTER VI

Among the most respected of the names beginning in C which the *Court Guide* contained, in the year 18— was that of Crawley, Sir Pitt, Baronet, Great Gaunt Street and Queen's Crawley, Hants. This honorable name had figured constantly also in the *Parliamentary List* for many years, in conjunction with that of a number of other worthy gentlemen who sat in turns for the borough.

Sir Pitt was first married to Grizzel, sixth daughter of Mungo Binkie, Lord Binkie. She brought him two sons—Pitt, named not so much after his father as after the heaven-born Minister, and Rawdon Crawley, from the Prince of Wales's friend whom his Majesty George IV forgot so completely. Many years after her ladyship's demise, Sir Pitt led to the altar Rosa, daughter of Mr. G. Dawson of Mudbury, by whom he had two daughters, for whose benefit Miss Rebecca Sharp was now engaged as governess. It will be seen that the young lady was come into a family of very genteel connections, and was about to move in a much more distinguished circle than that humble one which she had just quitted in Russell Square.

She had received her orders to join her pupils in a note which was written upon an old envelope, and which contained the following words:

> Sir Pitt Crawley begs Miss Sharp and baggidge may be hear on Tuesday, as I leaf for Queen's Crawley to-morrow morning *erly*.
> Great Gaunt Street.

Rebecca had never seen a baronet, as far as she knew, and as soon as she had taken leave of Amelia, and counted the guineas which good-natured Mr. Sedley had put into a purse for her, and as soon as she had done wiping her eyes with her handkerchief (which operation she concluded the very moment the carriage had turned the corner of the street), she began to depict in her own mind what a baronet must be. "I wonder does he wear a star?" thought she. "Or is it only lords that wear stars? But he will be very handsomely dressed in a Court suit with ruffles, and his hair a little powdered, like Mr. Wroughton at Covent Garden. I suppose he will be awfully proud, and that I shall be treated most contemptuously. Still I must bear my hard lot as well as I can—at least I shall be among *gentlefolk*, and not with vulgar City people." And she fell to thinking of her Russell Square friends with that very same philosophical bitterness with which in a certain apologue the fox is represented as speaking of the grapes.

Having passed through Gaunt Square into Great Gaunt Street, the carriage at length stopped at a tall gloomy house between two other tall gloomy houses, each with a hatchment over the middle drawing-room window, as is the custom of houses in Great Gaunt Street, in which gloomy locality death seems to reign perpetual. The shutters of the first-floor windows of Sir Pitt's mansion were

closed. Those of the dining-room were partially open, and the blinds neatly covered up in old newspapers.

John, the groom, who had driven the carriage alone, did not care to descend to ring the bell, and so prayed a passing milk boy to perform that office for him. When the bell was rung, a head appeared between the interstices of the dining-room shutters and the door was opened by a man in drab breeches and gaiters, with a dirty old coat, a foul old neckcloth lashed round his bristly neck, a shining bald head, a leering red face, a pair of twinkling gray eyes, and a mouth perpetually on the grin.

"This Sir Pitt Crawley's?" says John from the box.

"Ees," says the man at the door, with a nod.

"Hand down these 'ere trunks, then," said John.

"Hand 'm down yourself," said the porter.

"Don't you see I can't leave my hosses? Come, bear a hand, my fine feller, and miss will give you some beer," said John, with a horselaugh, for he was no longer respectful to Miss Sharp, as her connection with the family was broken off and as she had given nothing to the servants on coming away.

The bald-headed man, taking his hands out of his breeches pockets, advanced on this summons, and throwing Miss Sharp's trunk over his shoulder, carried it into the house.

"Take this basket and shawl, if you please, and open the door," said Miss Sharp, and descended from the carriage in much indignation. "I shall write to Mr. Sedley and inform him of your conduct," said she to the groom.

"Don't," replied that functionary. "I hope you've forgot nothink? Miss 'Melia's gownds—have you got them—as the lady's maid was to have 'ad? I hope they'll fit you. Shut the door, Jim, you'll get no good out of *'er*," continued John, pointing with his thumb toward Miss Sharp. "A bad lot, I tell you, a bad lot." And so saying, Mr. Sedley's groom drove away. The truth is, he was attached to the lady's maid in question, and indignant that she should have been robbed of her perquisites.

On entering the dining-room by the orders of the individual in gaiters, Rebecca found that apartment not more cheerful than such rooms usually are when genteel families are out of town. The faithful chambers seem, as it were, to mourn the absence of their masters. The Turkey carpet has rolled itself up and retired sulkily under the sideboard, the pictures have hidden their faces behind old sheets of brown paper, the ceiling lamp is muffled up in a dismal sack of brown holland, the window curtains have disappeared under all sorts of shabby envelopes, the marble bust of Sir Walpole Crawley is looking from its black corner at the bare boards and the oiled fire irons and the empty card racks over the mantelpiece; the cellaret has lurked away behind the carpet; the chairs are turned up heads and tails along the walls; and in the dark corner opposite the statue is an old-fashioned crabbed knife box, locked and sitting on a dumb waiter. Two kitchen chairs and a round table and an attenuated old poker and tongs were, however, gathered round the fireplace, as was a saucepan over a feeble, sputtering fire. There was a bit of cheese and bread and a tin candlestick on the table, and a little black porter in a pint pot.

"Had your dinner, I suppose? It is not too warm for you? Like a drop of beer?"

"Where is Sir Pitt Crawley?" said Miss Sharp majestically.

"He, he! *I*'m Sir Pitt Crawley. Reklect you owe me a pint for bringing down your luggage. He, he! Ask Tinker if I ain't. Mrs. Tinker, Miss Sharp—Miss Governess, Mrs. Charwoman. Ho, ho!"

The lady addressed as Mrs. Tinker at this moment made her appearance with a pipe and a paper of tobacco, for which she had been dispatched a minute before Miss Sharp's arrival, and she handed the articles over to Sir Pitt, who had taken his seat by the fire.

"Where's the farden?" said he. "I gave you three halfpence. Where's the change, old Tinker?"

"There!" replied Mrs. Tinker, flinging down the coin. "It's only baronets as cares about farthings."

"A farthing a day is seven shillings a year," answered the M.P. "Seven shillings a year is the interest of seven guineas. Take care of your farthings, old Tinker, and your guineas will come quite nat'ral."

"You may be sure it's Sir Pitt Crawley, young woman," said Mrs. Tinker surlily, "because he looks to his farthings. You'll know him better afore long."

"And like me none the worse, Miss Sharp," said the old gentleman, with an air almost of politeness. "I must be just before I'm generous."

"He never gave away a farthing in his life," growled Tinker.

"Never, and never will—it's against my principle. Go and get another chair from the kitchen, Tinker, if you want to sit down, and then we'll have a bit of supper."

Presently the Baronet plunged a fork into the saucepan on the fire and withdrew from the pot a piece of tripe and an onion, which he divided into pretty equal portions, and of which he partook with Mrs. Tinker. "You see, Miss Sharp, when I'm not here Tinker's on board wages; when I'm in town she dines with the family. Haw! haw! I'm glad Miss Sharp's not hungry, ain't you, Tink?" And they fell to upon their frugal supper.

"You'll sleep with Tinker tonight," he said. "It's a big bed, and there's room for two. Lady Crawley died in it. Good night."

Sir Pitt went off after this benediction, and the solemn Tinker, rushlight in hand, led the way up the great bleak stone stairs, past the great dreary drawing-room doors with the handles muffled up in paper, into the great front bedroom where Lady Crawley had slept her last. The bed and chamber were so funereal and gloomy you might have fancied not only that Lady Crawley died in the room, but that her ghost inhabited it. Rebecca sprang about the apartment, however, with the greatest liveliness, and had peeped into the huge wardrobes and the closets and the cupboards and tried the drawers which were locked, and examined the dreary pictures and toilet appointments, while the old charwoman was saying her prayers.

"I shouldn't like to sleep in this yeer bed without a good conscience, miss," said the old woman.

"There's room for us and a half-dozen of ghosts in it," says Rebecca. "Tell

me all about Lady Crawley and Sir Pitt Crawley, and everybody, my *dear* Mrs. Tinker."

But old Tinker was not to be pumped by this little cross-questioner, and signifying to her that bed was a place for sleeping, not conversation, set up in her corner of the bed such a snore as only the nose of innocence can produce. Rebecca lay awake for a long, long time thinking of the morrow and of the new world into which she was going, and of her chances of success there. The rushlight flickered in the basin. The mantelpiece cast up a great black shadow over half of a moldy old sampler which her defunct ladyship had worked, no doubt, and over two little family pictures of young lads, one in a college gown and the other in a red jacket like a soldier. When she went to sleep Rebecca chose that one to dream about.

At four o'clock on such a roseate summer's morning as even made Great Gaunt Street look cheerful, the faithful Tinker, having wakened her bedfellow and bid her prepare for departure, unbarred and unbolted the great hall door, and taking her way into Oxford Street, summoned a coach from a stand there. It is needless to particularize the number of the vehicle, or to state that the driver was stationed thus early in the neighborhood of Swallow Street in hopes that some young buck, reeling homeward from the tavern, might need the aid of his vehicle, and pay him with the generosity of intoxication.

CHAPTER VII

Miss Rebecca Sharp to Miss Amelia Sedley, Russell Square, London.
(Free—Pitt Crawley)

My dearest, sweetest Amelia:

With what mingled joy and sorrow do I take up the pen to write to my dearest friend! Oh, what a change between today and yesterday! Now I am friendless and alone; yesterday I was at home, in the sweet company of a sister whom I shall ever, *ever* cherish!

I will not tell you in what tears and sadness I passed the fatal night in which I separated from you. *You* went on Tuesday to joy and happiness, with your mother and *your devoted young soldier* by your side; and I thought of you all night, dancing at the Perkins's, the prettiest, I am sure, of all the young ladies at the ball. I was brought by the groom in the old carriage to Sir Pitt Crawley's town house, where, after John the groom had behaved most rudely and insolently to me (alas! 'twas safe to insult poverty and misfortune!), I was given over to Sir P's care, and made to pass the night in an old gloomy bed, and by the side of a horrid gloomy old charwoman who keeps the house. I did not sleep one single wink the whole night.

Sir Pitt is not what we silly girls, when we used to read *Cecilia* at Chiswick, imagined a baronet must have been. Anything, indeed, less like

Lord Orville cannot be imagined. Fancy an old, stumpy, short, vulgar, and very dirty man, in old clothes and shabby old gaiters, who smokes a horrid pipe and cooks his own horrid supper in a saucepan. He speaks with a country accent, and swore a great deal at the old charwoman, at the hackney coachman who drove us to the inn where the coach went from, and on which I made the journey *outside for the greater part of the way.*

I was awakened at daybreak by the charwoman, and having arrived at the inn, was at first placed inside the coach. But when we got to a place called Leakington, where the rain began to fall very heavily—will you believe it?—I was forced to come outside; for Sir Pitt is a proprietor of the coach, and as a passenger came at Mudbury who wanted an inside place, I was obliged to go outside in the rain, where, however, a young gentleman from Cambridge College sheltered me very kindly in one of his *several* greatcoats.

This gentleman and the guard seemed to know Sir Pitt very well, and laughed at him a great deal. They both agreed in calling him an *old screw*, which means a very stingy, avaricious person. He never gives any money to anybody, they said (and this meanness I hate); and the young gentleman made me remark that we drove very slow for the last two stages on the road because Sir Pitt was on the box and because he is proprietor of the horses for this part of the journey. "But won't I flog 'em on to Squashmore when I take the ribbons?" said the young Cantab. "And sarve 'em right, Master Jack," said the guard. When I comprehended the meaning of this phrase, and that Master Jack intended to drive the rest of the way and revenge himself on Sir Pitt's horses, of course I laughed too.

A carriage and four splendid horses covered with armorial bearings, however, awaited us at Mudbury, four miles from Queen's Crawley, and we made our entrance to the Baronet's park in state. There is a fine avenue of a mile long leading to the house, and the woman at the lodge gate (over the pillars of which are a serpent and a dove, the supporters of the Crawley arms) made us a number of curtsies as she flung open the old iron carved doors, which are something like those at odious Chiswick.

"There's an avenue," said Sir Pitt, "a mile long. There's six thousand pound of timber in them there trees. Do you call that nothing?" He pronounced avenue, *evenue*, and nothing, *nothink*, so droll; and he had a Mr. Hodson, his hind from Mudbury, into the carriage with him, and they talked about distraining, and selling up, and draining and subsoiling, and a great deal about tenants and farming—much more than I could understand.

As we passed, I remarked a beautiful church spire rising above some old elms in the park, and before them, in the midst of a lawn and some outhouses, an old red house with tall chimneys covered with ivy and the windows shining in the sun. "Is that your church, sir?" I said.

"Yes, hang it," said Sir Pitt (only he used, dear, *a much wickeder word*). "How's Buty, Hodson? Buty's my brother Bute, my dear—my brother the Parson. Buty and the Beast I call him, ha, ha!"

Hodson laughed too, and then, looking more grave and nodding his head, said, "I'm afraid he's better, Sir Pitt. He was out on his pony yesterday, looking at our corn."

"Looking after his tithes, hang 'un" (only he used the same wicked word). "Will brandy and water never kill him? He's as tough as old whatdyecallum—old Methusalem."

Presently, seeing two little boys gathering sticks in the wood, Mr. Hodson jumped out of the carriage, at Sir Pitt's order, and rushed upon them with his whip. "Pitch into 'em, Hodson," roared the Baronet. "Flog their little souls out, and bring 'em up to the house, the vagabonds. I'll commit 'em as sure as my name's Pitt." And presently we heard Mr. Hodson's whip cracking on the shoulders of the poor little blubbering wretches and Sir Pitt, seeing that the malefactors were in custody, drove on to the hall.

All the servants were ready to meet us, and

Here, my dear, I was interrupted last night by a dreadful thumping at my door—and who do you think it was? Sir Pitt Crawley in his nightcap and dressing gown—such a figure! As I shrank away from such a visitor, he came forward and seized my candle. "No candles after eleven o'clock, Miss Becky," said he. "Go to bed in the dark, you pretty little hussy" (that is what he called me) "and unless you wish me to come for the candle every night, mind and be in bed at eleven." And with this, he and Mr. Horrocks the butler went off laughing. You may be sure I shall not encourage any more of their visits. They let loose two immense bloodhounds at night, which all last night were yelling and howling at the moon.

Before the house of Queen's Crawley, which is an odious old-fashioned red-brick mansion with tall chimneys and gables of the style of Queen Bess, there is a terrace flanked by the family dove and serpent, and on which the great hall door opens. And oh, my dear, the great hall I am sure is as big and as glum as the great hall in the dear Castle of Udolpho. It has a large fireplace, in which we might put half Miss Pinkerton's school, and the grate is big enough to roast an ox at the very least. Round the room hang I don't know how many generations of Crawleys, some with beards and ruffs, some with huge wigs and toes turned out, some dressed in long straight stays and gowns that look as stiff as towers, and some with long ringlets, and oh, my dear! scarcely any stays at all. At one end of the hall is the great staircase all in black oak, as dismal as may be, and on either side are tall doors with stags' heads over them leading to the billiard room and the library and the great yellow saloon and the morning rooms. I think there are at least twenty bedrooms on the first floor. One of them has the bed in which Queen Elizabeth slept, and I have been taken by my new pupils through all these fine apartments this morning. They are not rendered less gloomy, I promise you, by having the shutters always shut; and there is scarce one of the apartments but when the light was let into it, I expected to see a ghost in the room. We have a schoolroom on the second floor, with my bedroom leading into it on one side and that of the

young ladies on the other. Then there are Mr. Pitt's apartments—Mr. Crawley, he is called—the eldest son, and Mr. Rawdon Crawley's rooms—he is an officer like *somebody*, and away with his regiment. There is no want of room, I assure you. You might lodge all the people in Russell Square in the house, I think, and have space to spare.

Half an hour after our arrival the great dinner bell was rung, and I came down with my two pupils (they are very thin, insignificant little chits of ten and eight years old). I came down in your *dear* muslin gown, for I am to be treated as one of the family—except on company days, when the young ladies and I are to dine upstairs.

Well, the great dinner bell rang, and we all assembled in the little drawing-room where my Lady Crawley sits. She is the second Lady Crawley, and mother of the young ladies. She was an ironmonger's daughter, and her marriage was thought a great match. She looks as if she had been handsome once, and her eyes are always weeping for the loss of her beauty. She is pale and meager and high-shouldered, and has not a word to say for herself, evidently. Her stepson, Mr. Crawley, was likewise in the room. He was in full dress, as pompous as an undertaker. He is pale, thin, ugly, silent; he has thin legs, no chest, hay-colored whiskers and straw-colored hair. He is the very picture of his sainted mother over the mantelpiece—Griselda of the noble house of Binkie.

"This is the new governess, Mr. Crawley," said Lady Crawley, coming forward and taking my hand. "Miss Sharp."

"Oh!" said Mr. Crawley, and pushed his head once forward and began again to read a great pamphlet with which he was busy.

"I hope you will be kind to my girls," said Lady Crawley, with her pink eyes always full of tears.

"Law, Ma, of course she will," said the eldest, and I saw at a glance that I need not be afraid of *that* woman.

"My lady is served," says the butler in black, in an immense white shirt frill that looked as if it had been one of the Queen Elizabeth's ruffs depicted in the hall. And so, taking Mr. Crawley's arm, she led the way to the dining-room, whither I followed with my little pupils in each hand.

Sir Pitt was already in the room with a silver jug. He had just been to the cellar, and was in full dress too—that is, he had taken his gaiters off and showed his little dumpy legs in black worsted stockings. The sideboard was covered with glistening old plate—old cups, both gold and silver, old salvers and cruet stands, like Rundell and Bridge's shop. Everything on the table was in silver too, and two footmen with red hair and canary-colored liveries stood on either side of the sideboard.

Mr. Crawley said a long grace, and Sir Pitt said Amen, and the great silver dish covers were removed.

"What have we for dinner, Betsy?" said the Baronet.

"Mutton broth, I believe, Sir Pitt," answered Lady Crawley.

"*Mouton aux navets*," added the butler gravely (pronounce, if you

please, moutongonavvy), "and the soup is *potage de mouton à l'écossaise.* The side dishes contain *pommes de terre au naturel* and *choufleur à l'eau.*"

"Mutton's mutton," said the Baronet, "and a devilish good thing. What *ship* was it, Horrocks, and when did you kill?"

"One of the black-faced Scotch, Sir Pitt. We killed on Thursday."

"Will you take some *potage,* Miss ah—Miss Blunt?" said Mr. Crawley.

"Capital Scotch broth, my dear," said Sir Pitt, "though they call it by a French name."

"I believe it is the custom, sir, in decent society," said Mr. Crawley haughtily, "to call the dish as I have called it." And it was served to us on silver soup plates by the footmen in the canary coats, with the *mouton aux navets.* Then "ale and water" were brought and served to us young ladies in wineglasses. I am not a judge of ale, but I can say with a clear conscience I prefer water.

While we were enjoying our repast, Sir Pitt took occasion to ask what had become of the shoulders of the mutton.

"I believe they were eaten in the servants' hall," said my lady, humbly.

"They was, my lady," said Horrocks, "and precious little else we get there neither."

Sir Pitt burst into a horselaugh and continued his conversation with Mr. Horrocks. "That there little black pig of the Kent sow's breed must be uncommon fat now."

"It's not quite busting, Sir Pitt," said the butler with the gravest air, at which Sir Pitt, and with him the young ladies this time, began to laugh violently.

"Miss Crawley, Miss Rose Crawley," said Mr. Crawley, "your laughter strikes me as being exceedingly out of place."

"Never mind, my lord," said the Baronet. "We'll try the porker on Saturday. Kill 'un on Saturday morning, John Horrocks. Miss Sharp adores pork, don't you, Miss Sharp?"

And I think this is all the conversation that I remember at dinner. When the repast was concluded, a jug of hot water was placed before Sir Pitt, with a case bottle containing, I believe, rum. Mr. Horrocks served myself and my pupils with three little glasses of wine, and a bumper was poured out for my lady. When we retired, she took from her work drawer an enormous interminable piece of knitting; the young ladies began to play at cribbage with a dirty pack of cards. We had but one candle lighted—but it was in a magnificent old silver candlestick—and after a very few questions from my lady, I had my choice of amusement between a volume of sermons and a pamphlet on the Corn Laws, which Mr. Crawley had been reading before dinner.

So we sat for an hour until steps were heard.

"Put away the cards, girls!" cried my lady in a great tremor. "Put down Mr. Crawley's books, Miss Sharp." And these orders had been scarcely obeyed when Mr. Crawley entered the room.

"We will resume yesterday's discourse, young ladies," said he, "and you

shall each read a page by turns, so that Miss a—Miss Short may have an opportunity of hearing you." And the poor girls began to spell a long dismal sermon delivered at Bethesda Chapel, Liverpool, on behalf of the mission for the Chickasaw Indians. Was it not a charming evening?

At ten the servants were told to call Sir Pitt and the household to prayers. Sir Pitt came in first, very much flushed and rather unsteady in his gait; and after him the butler, the canaries, Mr. Crawley's man, three other men smelling very much of the stable, and four women, one of whom, I remarked, was very much overdressed, and who flung me a look of great scorn as she plumped down on her knees.

After Mr. Crawley had done haranguing and expounding, we received our candles, and then we went to bed, and then I was disturbed in my writing, as I have described to my dearest, sweetest Amelia.

Good night. A thousand, thousand, thousand kisses!

Saturday.—This morning at five, I heard the shrieking of the little black pig. Rose and Violet introduced me to it yesterday, and to the stables, and to the kennel. And to the gardener, who was picking fruit to send to market, and from whom they begged hard a bunch of hothouse grapes, but he said that Sir Pitt had numbered every "Man Jack" of them, and it would be as much as his place was worth to give any away. The darling girls caught a colt in a paddock, and asked me if I would ride and began to ride themselves when the groom, coming with horrid oaths, drove them away.

Lady Crawley is always knitting the worsted. Sir Pitt is always tipsy every night, and I believe sits with Horrocks, the butler. Mr. Crawley always reads sermons in the evening, and in the morning is locked up in his study, or else rides to Mudbury on county business, or to Squashmore, where he preaches on Wednesdays and Fridays to the tenants there.

A hundred thousand grateful loves to your dear papa and mamma. Is your poor brother recovered of his rack punch? Oh, dear, oh, dear! How men should beware of wicked punch!

Ever and ever thine own REBECCA

Everything considered, I think it is quite as well for our dear Amelia Sedley in Russell Square that Miss Sharp and she are parted. Rebecca is a droll, funny creature, to be sure; and those descriptions of the poor lady weeping for the loss of her beauty and the gentleman "with hay-colored whiskers and straw-colored hair" are very smart, doubtless, and show a great knowledge of the world. That she might, when on her knees, have been thinking of something better than Miss Horrocks' ribbons has possibly struck both of us. But my kind reader will please to remember that this history has *Vanity Fair* for a title, and that Vanity Fair is a very vain, wicked, foolish place, full of all sorts of humbugs and falseness and pretensions.

CHAPTER VIII

Sir pitt crawley was a philosopher with a taste for what is called low life. His first marriage with the daughter of the noble Binkie had been made under the auspices of his parents; and as he often told Lady Crawley in her lifetime, she was such a confounded quarrelsome highbred jade that when she died he was hanged if he would ever take another of her sort, at her ladyship's demise he kept his promise and selected for a second wife Miss Rose Dawson, daughter of Mr. John Thomas Dawson, ironmonger, of Mudbury. What a happy woman was Rose to be my Lady Crawley!

As the only endowments with which Nature had gifted Lady Crawley were those of pink cheeks and a white skin, and as she had no sort of character, nor talents, nor opinions, nor occupations, nor amusements, nor that vigor of soul and ferocity of temper which often falls to the lot of entirely foolish women, her hold upon Sir Pitt's affections was not very great. Her roses faded out of her cheeks and the pretty freshness left her figure after the birth of a couple of children, and she became a mere machine in her husband's house, of no more use than the late Lady Crawley's grand piano. Being a light-complexioned woman, she wore light clothes, as most blondes will, and appeared in preference in draggled sea-green or slatternly sky-blue. She worked that worsted day and night, or other pieces like it. She had counterpanes in the course of a few years to all the beds in Crawley. She had a small flower garden for which she had rather an affection, but beyond this no other like or disliking. When her husband was rude to her, she was apathetic; whenever he struck her, she cried. She had not character enough to take to drinking, and moaned about slipshod and in curl papers all day.

The languid dullness of their mamma did not, as it may be supposed, awaken much affection in her little daughters, but they were very happy in the servants' hall and in the stables. And the Scotch gardener having luckily a good wife and some good children, they got a little wholesome society and instruction in his lodge, which was the only education bestowed upon them until Miss Sharp came.

Her engagement was owing to the remonstrances of Mr. Pitt Crawley, the only friend or protector Lady Crawley ever had and the only person, besides her children, for whom she entertained a little feeble attachment. Mr. Pitt took after the noble Binkies, from whom he was descended, and was a very polite and proper gentleman. When he grew to man's estate and came back from Christchurch, he began to reform the slackened discipline of the hall in spite of his father, who stood in awe of him. He was a man of such rigid refinement that he would have starved rather than have dined without a white neckcloth. Once, when just from college and when Horrocks the butler brought him a letter without placing it previously on a tray, he gave that domestic a look, and administered to him a speech, so cutting that Horrocks

ever after trembled before him. The whole household bowed to him. Lady Crawley's curl papers came off earlier when he was at home. Sir Pitt's muddy gaiters disappeared, and if that incorrigible old man still adhered to other old habits, he never fuddled himself with rum and water in his son's presence, and only talked to his servants in a very reserved and polite manner, and those persons remarked that Sir Pitt never swore at Lady Crawley while his son was in the room.

At college his career was of course highly creditable. And here he prepared himself for public life, into which he was to be introduced by the patronage of his grandfather, Lord Binkie, by studying the ancient and modern orators with great assiduity and by speaking unceasingly at the debating societies. But though he had a fine flux of words, and delivered his little voice with great pomposity and pleasure to himself, and never advanced any sentiment or opinion which was not perfectly trite and stale and supported by a Latin quotation, yet he failed somehow, in spite of a mediocrity which ought to have ensured any man a success. He did not even get the prize poem, which all his friends said he was sure of.

After leaving college he became private secretary to Lord Binkie, and was then appointed attaché to the Legation at Pumpernickel, which post he filled with perfect honor, and brought home dispatches—consisting of Strasburg pie—to the Foreign Minister of the day. After remaining ten years attaché (several years after the lamented Lord Binkie's demise), and finding the advancement slow, he at length gave up the diplomatic service in some disgust and began to turn country gentleman.

He wrote a pamphlet on malt on returning to England (for he was an ambitious man, and always liked to be before the public), and took a strong part in the Negro-emancipation question. Then he became a friend of Mr. Wilberforce's, whose politics he admired, and had that famous correspondence with the Reverend Silas Hornblower, on the Ashantee Mission. He was in London, if not for the Parliament session, at least in May for the religious meetings. In the country he was a magistrate, and an active visitor and speaker among those destitute of religious instruction. He was said to be paying his addresses to Lady Jane Sheepshanks, Lord Southdown's third daughter, and whose sister, Lady Emily, wrote those sweet tracts, *The Sailor's True Binnacle*, and *The Applewoman of Finchley Common.*

Miss Sharp's accounts of his employment at Queen's Crawley were not caricatures. He subjected the servants there to the devotional exercises before mentioned, in which (and so much the better) he brought his father to join. He patronized an Independent meetinghouse in Crawley parish, much to the indignation of his uncle the Rector and to the consequent delight of Sir Pitt, who was induced to go himself once or twice, which occasioned some violent sermons at Crawley parish church, directed point-blank at the Baronet's old Gothic pew there. Honest Sir Pitt, however, did not feel the force of these discourses, as he always took his nap during sermon time.

If mere parsimony could have made a man rich, Sir Pitt Crawley might have become very wealthy—if he had been an attorney in a country town, with no

capital but his brains, it is very possible that he would have turned them to good account, and might have achieved for himself a very considerable influence and competency. But he was unluckily endowed with a good name and a large though encumbered estate, both of which went rather to injure than to advance him. He had a taste for law, which cost him many thousands yearly; and being a great deal too clever to be robbed, as he said, by any single agent, allowed his affairs to be mismanaged by a dozen, whom he all equally mistrusted. He was such a sharp landlord that he could hardly find any but bankrupt tenants, and such a close farmer as to grudge almost the seed to the ground, whereupon revengeful Nature grudged him the crops which she granted to more liberal husbandmen. He speculated in every possible way; he worked mines; bought canal shares; horsed coaches; took government contracts; and was the busiest man and magistrate of his county. As he would not pay honest agents at his granite quarry, he had the satisfaction of finding that four overseers ran away and took fortunes with them to America. For want of proper precautions, his coal mines filled with water. The Government flung his contract of damaged beef upon his hands. And for his coach horses, every mail proprietor in the kingdom knew that he lost more horses than any man in the country, from underfeeding and buying cheap. In disposition he was sociable, and far from being proud—nay, he rather preferred the society of a farmer or a horse-dealer to that of a gentleman like my lord, his son. He was fond of drink, of swearing, of joking with the farmers' daughters. He was never known to give away a shilling or to do a good action, but was of a pleasant, sly, laughing mood, and would cut his joke and drink his glass with a tenant and sell him up the next day, or have his laugh with the poacher he was transporting with equal good humor. His politeness for the fair sex has already been hinted at by Miss Rebecca Sharp—in a word, the whole baronetage, peerage, commonage of England did not contain a more cunning, mean, selfish, foolish, disreputable old man. That blood-red hand of Sir Pitt Crawley's would be in anybody's pocket except his own.

One great cause why Mr. Crawley had such a hold over the affections of his father resulted from money arrangements. The Baronet owed his son a sum of money out of the jointure of his mother, which he did not find it convenient to pay; indeed he had an almost invincible repugnance to paying anybody, and could only be brought by force to discharge his debts. Miss Sharp calculated (for she became, as we shall hear speedily, inducted into most of the secrets of the family) that the mere payment of his creditors cost the honorable Baronet several hundreds yearly, but this was a delight he could not forgo. He had a savage pleasure in making the poor wretches wait, and in shifting from court to court and from term to term the period of satisfaction. What's the good of being in Parliament, he said, if you must pay your debts? Hence, indeed, his position as a senator was not a little useful to him.

Sir Pitt had an unmarried half-sister who inherited her mother's large fortune, and though the Baronet proposed to borrow this money of her on mortgage, Miss Crawley declined the offer and preferred the security of the funds. She had signified, however, her intention of leaving her inheritance between

Sir Pitt's second son and the family at the rectory, and had once or twice paid the debts of Rawdon Crawley in his career at college and in the army. Miss Crawley was, in consequence, an object of great respect when she came to Queen's Crawley, for she had a balance at her banker's which would have made her beloved anywhere.

CHAPTER IX

And now, being received as a member of the amiable family whose portraits we have sketched in the foregoing pages, it became naturally Rebecca's duty to make herself, as she said, agreeable to her benefactors, and to gain their confidence to the utmost of her power. Who can but admire this quality of gratitude in an unprotected orphan? And if there entered some degree of selfishness into her calculations, who can say but that her prudence was perfectly justifiable? "I am alone in the world," said the friendless girl. "I have nothing to look for but what my own labor can bring me; and while that little pink-faced chit Amelia, with not half my sense, has ten thousand pounds and an establishment secure, poor Rebecca (and my figure is far better than hers) has only herself and her own wits to trust to. Well, let us see if my wits cannot provide me with an honorable maintenance, and if some day or other I cannot show Miss Amelia my real superiority over her. Not that I dislike poor Amelia. Who can dislike such a harmless, good-natured creature? Only it will be a fine day when I can take my place above her in the world, as why indeed should I not?" Thus it was that our little romantic friend formed visions of the future for herself—nor must we be scandalized that in all her castles in the air a husband was the principal inhabitant. Of what else have young ladies to think but husbands? Of what else do their dear mammas think? "I must be my own mamma," said Rebecca, not without a tingling consciousness of defeat as she thought over her little misadventure with Jos Sedley.

So she wisely determined to render her position with the Queen's Crawley family comfortable and secure, and to this end resolved to make friends of everyone around her who could at all interfere with her comfort.

As my Lady Crawley was not one of these personages, and a woman, moreover, so indolent and void of character as not to be of the least consequence in her own house, Rebecca soon found that it was not at all necessary to cultivate her goodwill—indeed, impossible to gain it. She used to talk to her pupils about their "poor Mamma," and though she treated that lady with every demonstration of cool respect, it was to the rest of the family that she wisely directed the chief part of her attentions.

With the young people, whose applause she thoroughly gained, her method was pretty simple. She did not pester their young brains with too much learning, but, on the contrary, let them have their own way in regard to educating themselves, for what instruction is more effectual than self-instruction? The eldest was rather fond of books, and as there was in the old library at Queen's Crawley a considerable provision of works of light literature of the last cen-

tury, both in the French and English languages, and as nobody ever troubled the bookshelves but herself, Rebecca was enabled agreeably, and as it were in playing, to impart a great deal of instruction to Miss Rose Crawley.

Miss Violet's tastes were, on the contrary, more rude and boisterous than those of her sister. She knew the sequestered spots where the hens laid their eggs. She could climb a tree to rob the nests of the feathered songsters of their speckled spoils. And her pleasure was to ride the young colts, and to scour the plains like Camilla. She was the favorite of her father and of the stablemen. She was the darling and withal the terror of the cook, for she discovered the haunts of the jam pots, and would attack them when they were within her reach. She and her sister were engaged in constant battles. Any of which peccadilloes, if Miss Sharp discovered, she did not tell them to Lady Crawley, who would have told them to the father, or worse, to Mr. Crawley, but promised not to tell if Miss Violet would be a good girl and love her governess.

With Mr. Crawley Miss Sharp was respectful and obedient. She used to consult him on passages of French which she could not understand, though her mother was a Frenchwoman, and which he would construe to her satisfaction. And besides giving her his aid in profane literature, he was kind enough to select for her books of a more serious tendency, and address to her much of his conversation. She admired beyond measure his speech at the Quashimaboo Aid Society, took an interest in his pamphlet on malt, was often affected, even to tears, by his discourses of an evening, and would say, "Oh, thank you, sir," with a sigh and a look up to Heaven that made him occasionally condescend to shake hands with her. "Blood is everything after all," would that aristocratic religionist say. "How Miss Sharp is awakened by my words when not one of the people here is touched. I am too fine for them—too delicate. I must familiarize my style—but she understands it. Her mother was a Montmorency."

Indeed it was from this famous family, as it appears, that Miss Sharp, by the mother's side, was descended. Of course she did not say that her mother had been on the stage; it would have shocked Mr. Crawley's religious scruples. How many noble émigrées had this horrid revolution plunged in poverty! She had several stories about her ancestors ere she had been many months in the house, some of which Mr. Crawley happened to find in D'Hozier's *Dictionary*, which was in the library, and which strengthened his belief in their truth and in the high breeding of Rebecca. He took Rebecca to task once or twice about the propriety of playing at backgammon with Sir Pitt, saying that it was a godless amusement, and that she would be much better engaged in reading *Thrump's Legacy*, or *The Blind Washerwoman of Moorfields*, or any work of a more serious nature. But Miss Sharp said her dear mother used often to play the same game with the old Count de Trictrac and the venerable Abbé de Cornet, and so found an excuse for this and other worldly amusements.

But it was not only by playing at backgammon with the Baronet that the little governess rendered herself agreeable to her employer. She found many different ways of being useful to him. She read over, with indefatigable patience, all those law papers with which he had promised to entertain her. She volunteered to copy many of his letters, and adroitly altered the spelling of

them so as to suit the usages of the present day. She became interested in everything appertaining to the estate; to the farm, the park, the garden, and the stables; and so delightful a companion was she that the Baronet would seldom take his after-breakfast walk without her (and the children, of course), when she would give her advice as to the trees which were to be lopped in the shrubberies, the garden beds to be dug, the crops which were to be cut, the horses which were to go to cart or plow. Before she had been a year at Queen's Crawley she had quite won the Baronet's confidence, and the conversation at the dinner table, which before used to be held between him and Mr. Horrocks the butler, was now almost exclusively between Sir Pitt and Miss Sharp. She was almost mistress of the house when Mrs. Crawley was absent, but conducted herself in her new and exalted situation with such circumspection and modesty as not to offend the authorities of the kitchen and stable, among whom her behavior was always exceedingly modest and affable. She was quite a different person from the haughty, shy, dissatisfied little girl whom we have known previously, and this change of temper proved great prudence, a sincere desire of amendment, or at any rate great moral courage on her part. Whether it was the heart which dictated this new system of complaisance and humility adopted by our Rebecca is to be proved by her after-history. A system of hypocrisy which lasts through whole years is one seldom satisfactorily practiced by a person of one and twenty. However, our readers will recollect that, though young in years, our heroine was old in life and experience, and we have written to no purpose if they have not discovered that she was a very clever woman.

The elder and younger son of the house of Crawley were, like the gentleman and lady in the weather box, never at home together—they hated each other cordially. Indeed Rawdon Crawley, the dragoon, had a great contempt for the establishment altogether, and seldom came thither except when his aunt paid her annual visit. The great good quality of this old lady has been mentioned. She possessed seventy thousand pounds, and had almost adopted Rawdon. She disliked her elder nephew exceedingly, and despised him as a milksop. In return he did not hesitate to state that her soul was irretrievably lost, and was of opinion that his brother's chance in the next world was not a whit better.

"She is a godless woman of the world," would Mr. Crawley say. "She lives with atheists and Frenchmen. My mind shudders when I think of her awful, awful situation, and that, near as she is to the grave, she should be so given up to vanity, licentiousness, profaneness, and folly." In fact, the old lady declined altogether to hear his hour's lecture of an evening, and when she came to Queen's Crawley alone, he was obliged to pretermit his usual devotional exercises.

"Shut up your sarmons, Pitt, when Miss Crawley comes down," said his father. "She has written to say that she won't stand the preachifying."

"Oh, sir, consider the servants!"

"The servants be hanged," said Sir Pitt, and his son thought even worse would happen were they deprived of the benefit of his instruction.

"Why, hang it, Pitt!" said the father to his remonstrance. "You wouldn't be such a flat as to let three thousand a year go out of the family?"

"What is money compared to our souls, sir?" continued Mr. Crawley.

"You mean that the old lady won't leave the money to you?"—And who knows but it *was* Mr. Crawley's meaning?

Old Miss Crawley was certainly one of the reprobate. She had a snug little house in Park Lane, and as she ate and drank a great deal too much during the season in London, she went to Harrowgate or Cheltenham for the summer. She was the most hospitable and jovial of old vestals, and had been a beauty in her day, she said. (All old women were beauties once, we very well know.) She was a bel-esprit, and a dreadful Radical for those days. She had been in France (where Saint-Just, they say, inspired her with an unfortunate passion), and loved ever after French novels, French cookery, and French wines. She read Voltaire, and had Rousseau by heart, talked very lightly about divorce and most energetically of the rights of women. She had pictures of Mr. Fox in every room in the house. When that statesman was in Opposition, I am not sure that she had not flung a main with him; and when he came into office, she took great credit for bringing over to him Sir Pitt and his colleague for Queen's Crawley, although Sir Pitt would have come over himself without any trouble on the honest lady's part. It is needless to say that Sir Pitt was brought to change his views after the death of the great Whig statesman.

This worthy old lady took a fancy to Rawdon Crawley when a boy, sent him to Cambridge (in opposition to his brother at Oxford), and when the young man was requested by the authorities of the first-named university to quit after a residence of two years, she bought him his commission in the Life Guards Green.

A perfect and celebrated "blood," or dandy about town, was this young officer. Boxing, rat-hunting, the fives' court, and four-in-hand driving were then the fashion of our British aristocracy, and he was an adept in all these noble sciences. And though he belonged to the household troops, who, as it was their duty to rally round the Prince Regent, had not shown their valor in foreign service yet, Rawdon Crawley had already (apropos of play, of which he was immoderately fond) fought three bloody duels, in which he gave ample proofs of his contempt for death.

"And for what follows after death," would Mr. Crawley observe, throwing his gooseberry-colored eyes up to the ceiling. He was always thinking of his brother's soul, or of the souls of those who differed with him in opinion. It is a sort of comfort which many of the serious give themselves.

Silly, romantic Miss Crawley, far from being horrified at the courage of her favorite, always used to pay his debts after his duels, and would not listen to a word that was whispered against his morality. "He will sow his wild oats," she would say, "and is worth far more than that puling hypocrite of a brother of his."

CHAPTER X

Besides these honest folks at the hall (whose simplicity and sweet rural purity surely show the advantage of a country life over a town one), we must introduce the reader to their relatives and neighbors at the rectory, Bute Crawley and his wife.

The Reverend Bute Crawley was a tall, stately, jolly, shovel-hatted man, far more popular in his county than the Baronet his brother. At college he pulled stroke oar in the Christchurch boat, and had thrashed all the best bruisers of the "town." He carried his taste for boxing and athletic exercises into private life. There was not a fight within twenty miles at which he was not present, nor a race, nor a coursing match, nor a regatta, nor a ball, nor an election, nor a visitation dinner, nor indeed a good dinner in the whole county, but he found means to attend it. You might see his bay mare and gig lamps a score of miles away from his rectory house whenever there was any dinner party at Fuddleston, or at Roxby, or at Wapshot Hall, or at the great lords of the county, with all of whom he was intimate. He had a fine voice, sang "A southerly wind and a cloudy sky," and gave the "whoop" in chorus with general applause. He rode to hounds in a pepper-and-salt frock, and was one of the best fishermen in the county.

Mrs. Crawley, the Rector's wife, was a smart little body who wrote this worthy divine's sermons. Being of a domestic turn, and keeping the house a great deal with her daughters, she ruled absolutely within the rectory, wisely giving her husband full liberty without. He was welcome to come and go, and dine abroad as many days as his fancy dictated, for Mrs. Crawley was a saving woman, and knew the price of port wine. Ever since Mrs. Bute carried off the young Rector of Queen's Crawley (she was of a good family, daughter of the late Lieutenant Colonel Hector MacTavish, and she and her brother played for Bute and won him at Harrowgate), she had been a prudent and thrifty wife to him. In spite of her care, however, he was always in debt. It took him at least ten years to pay off his college bills contracted during his father's lifetime. In the year 179—, when he was just clear of these incumbrances, he gave the odds of 100 to 1 (in twenties) against Kangaroo, who won the Derby. The Rector was obliged to take up the money at a ruinous interest, and had been struggling ever since. His sister helped him with a hundred now and then, but of course his great hope was in her death—when, "Hang it," (as he would say) "Matilda *must* leave me half her money."

So that the Baronet and his brother had every reason which two brothers possibly can have for being by the ears. Sir Pitt had had the better of Bute in innumerable family transactions. Young Pitt not only did not hunt, but set up a meetinghouse under his uncle's very nose. Rawdon, it was known, was to come in for the bulk of Miss Crawley's property.

It cannot be supposed that the arrival of such a personage as Rebecca at

Queen's Crawley, and her gradual establishment in the good graces of all people there, could be unremarked by Mrs. Bute Crawley. Mrs. Bute, who knew how many days the sirloin of beef lasted at the hall, how much linen was got ready at the great wash, how many peaches were on the south wall, how many doses her ladyship took when she was ill—for such points are matters of intense interest to certain persons in the country—Mrs. Bute, I say, could not pass over the hall governess without making every inquiry respecting her history and character. There was always the best understanding between the servants at the rectory and the hall. There was always a good glass of ale in the kitchen of the former place for the hall people, whose ordinary drink was very small—and, indeed, the Rector's lady knew exactly how much malt went to every barrel of hall beer—ties of relationship existed between the hall and rectory domestics, as between their masters, and through these channels, each family was perfectly well acquainted with the doings of the other.

Very soon then after her arrival, Rebecca began to take a regular place in Mrs. Crawley's bulletin from the hall. It was to this effect: "The black porker's killed—weighed *x* stone—salted the sides—pig's pudding and leg of pork for dinner. Mr. Cramp, from Mudbury, over with Sir Pitt about putting John Blackmore in jail—Mr. Pitt at meeting (with all the names of the people who attended)—my lady as usual—the young ladies with the governess."

Then the report would come—the new governess be a rare manager—Sir Pitt be very sweet on her—Mr. Crawley too—he be reading tracts to her. "What an abandoned wretch!" said little, eager, active, black-faced Mrs. Bute Crawley.

Finally, the reports were that the governess had "come round" everybody, wrote Sir Pitt's letters, did his business, managed his accounts—had the upper hand of the whole house, my lady, Mr. Crawley, the girls and all—at which Mrs. Crawley declared she was an artful hussy, and had some dreadful designs in view. Thus the doings at the hall were the great food for conversation at the rectory, and Mrs. Bute's bright eyes spied out everything that took place in the enemy's camp—everything and a great deal besides.

Mrs. Bute Crawley to Miss Pinkerton, The Mall, Chiswick

Rectory, Queen's Crawley, December —

My dear madam: Although it is so *many* years since I profited by your *delightful* and *invaluable* instructions, yet I have *ever* retained the *fondest* and *most reverential* regard for Miss Pinkerton and *dear* Chiswick. I hope your health is *good*. The world and *the cause of education* cannot afford to lose Miss Pinkerton for *many, many years*. When my friend Lady Fuddleston mentioned that her dear girls required an instructress (I am *too poor* to engage a governess for mine, but was I not educated at Chiswick?), "Who," I exclaimed, "can we consult but the excellent, the incomparable Miss Pinkerton?" In a word, have you, dear madam, any ladies on your list whose services might be made available to my kind friend and neighbor? I assure you she will take no governess *but of your choosing*.

My dear husband is pleased to say that he likes *everything which comes*

from Miss Pinkerton's school. How I wish I could present him and my beloved girls to the friend of my youth and the *admired* of the great lexicographer of our country! If you ever travel into Hampshire, Mr. Crawley begs me to say he hopes you will adorn our *rural rectory* with your presence. 'Tis the humble but happy home of

Your affectionate MARTHA CRAWLEY

P.S.—Mr. Crawley's brother, the Baronet, with whom we are not, alas! upon those terms of *unity* in which it *becomes brethren to dwell,* has a governess for his little girls who I am told had the good fortune to be educated at Chiswick. I hear various reports of her; and as I have the tenderest interest in my dearest little nieces, whom I wish, in spite of family differences, to see among my own children—and as I long to be attentive to *any pupil of yours*—do, my dear Miss Pinkerton, tell me *the history* of this young lady, whom, for *your sake,* I am most anxious to befriend.—M. C.

Miss Pinkerton to Mrs. Bute Crawley

JOHNSON HOUSE, CHISWICK, December, 18—

Dear madam: I have the honor to acknowledge your polite communication, to which I promptly reply. 'Tis most gratifying to one in my most arduous position to find that my maternal cares have elicited a responsive affection, and to recognize in the amiable Mrs. Bute Crawley my excellent pupil of former years, *the sprightly and accomplished* Miss Martha MacTavish. I am happy to have under my charge now the daughters of many of those who were your contemporaries at my establishment—what pleasure it would give me if your own beloved young ladies had need of my instructive superintendence!

Presenting my respectful compliments to Lady Fuddleston, I have the honor (epistolarily) to introduce to her ladyship my two friends Miss Tuffin and Miss Hawky.

Either of these young ladies is *perfectly qualified* to instruct in Greek, Latin, and the rudiments of Hebrew; in mathematics and history; in Spanish, French, Italian, and geography; in music, vocal and instrumental; in dancing without the aid of a master; and in the elements of natural sciences. In the use of the globes both are proficients. In addition to these, Miss Tuffin, who is daughter of the late Reverend Thomas Tuffin (Fellow of Corpus College, Cambridge), can instruct in the Syriac language and the elements of constitutional law. But as she is only eighteen years of age, and of exceedingly pleasing personal appearance, perhaps this young lady may be objectionable in Sir Huddleston Fuddleston's family.

Miss Letitia Hawky, on the other hand, is not personally well-favored. She is twenty-nine, her face is much pitted with the smallpox. She has a halt in her gait, red hair, and a trifling obliquity of vision. Both ladies are endowed with *every moral and religious virtue.* Their terms, of course,

are such as their accomplishments merit. With my most grateful respects to the Reverend Bute Crawley, I have the honor to be,

Dear madam,

Your most faithful and obedient servant,

BARBARA PINKERTON

P.S.—The Miss Sharp whom you mention as governess to Sir Pitt Crawley, Bart., M.P., was a pupil of mine, and I have nothing to say in her disfavor. Though her appearance is disagreeable, we cannot control the operations of nature; and though her parents were disreputable (her father being a painter several times bankrupt, and her mother, as I have since learned with horror, a dancer at the Opera), yet her talents are considerable, and I cannot regret that I received her *out of charity*. My dread is lest the principles of the mother—who was represented to me as a French countess forced to emigrate in the late revolutionary horrors, but who, as I have since found, was a person of the *very lowest order and morals*—should at any time prove to be *hereditary* in the unhappy young woman whom I took as *an outcast*. But her principles have *hitherto* been correct (I believe), and I am sure nothing will occur to injure them in the elegant and refined circle of the eminent Sir Pitt Crawley.

Miss Rebecca Sharp to Miss Amelia Sedley

I have not written to my beloved Amelia for these many weeks past, for what news was there to tell of the sayings and doings at Humdrum Hall, as I have christened it? And what do you care whether the turnip crop is good or bad, whether the fat pig weighed thirteen stone or fourteen, and whether the beasts thrive well upon mangel-wurzel? Every day since I last wrote has been like its neighbor. Before breakfast, a walk with Sir Pitt and his spud; after breakfast, studies (such as they are) in the schoolroom; after schoolroom, reading and writing about lawyers, leases, coal mines, canals, with Sir Pitt (whose secretary I am become); after dinner, Mr. Crawley's discourses or the Baronet's backgammon, during both of which amusements my lady looks on with equal placidity. She has become rather more interesting by being ailing of late, which has brought a new visitor to the hall in the person of a young doctor. Well, my dear, young women need never despair. The young doctor gave a certain friend of yours to understand that if she chose to be Mrs. Glauber, she was welcome to ornament the surgery! I told his impudence that the gilt pestle and mortar was quite ornament enough—as if I was born, indeed, to be a country surgeon's wife! Mr. Glauber went home seriously indisposed at his rebuff, took a cooling draught, and is now quite cured. Sir Pitt applauded my resolution highly; he would be sorry to lose his little secretary, I think, and I believe the old wretch likes me as much as it is in his nature to like anyone. Marry, indeed! and with a country apothecary, after—No, no, one cannot so soon

forget old associations, about which I will talk no more. Let us return to Humdrum Hall.

For some time past it is Humdrum Hall no longer. My dear, Miss Crawley has arrived with her fat horses, fat servants, fat spaniel—the great rich Miss Crawley, with seventy thousand pounds in the five per cents, whom, or I had better say *which*, her two brothers adore. She looks very apoplectic, the dear soul; no wonder her brothers are anxious about her. You should see them struggling to settle her cushions, or to hand her coffee! "When I come into the country," she says (for she has a great deal of humor), "I leave my toady, Miss Briggs, at home. My brothers are my toadies here, my dear, and a pretty pair they are!"

When she comes into the country our hall is thrown open, and for a month at least you would fancy old Sir Walpole was come to life again. We have dinner parties, and drive out in the coach and four—the footmen put on their newest canary-colored liveries. We drink claret and champagne as if we were accustomed to it every day. We have wax candles in the schoolroom, and fires to warm ourselves with. Lady Crawley is made to put on the brightest pea-green in her wardrobe, and my pupils leave off their thick shoes and tight old tartan pelisses and wear silk stockings and muslin frocks, as fashionable baronets' daughters should. Rose came in yesterday in a sad plight—the Wiltshire sow (an enormous pet of hers) ran her down, and destroyed a most lovely flowered lilac-silk dress by dancing over it. Had this happened a week ago, Sir Pitt would have sworn frightfully, have boxed the poor wretch's ears and put her upon bread and water for a month. All he said was, "I'll serve you out, miss, when your aunt's gone," and laughed off the accident as quite trivial. Let us hope his wrath will have passed away before Miss Crawley's departure. I hope so, for Miss Rose's sake, I am sure. What a charming reconciler and peacemaker money is!

Another admirable effect of Miss Crawley and her seventy thousand pounds is to be seen in the conduct of the two brothers Crawley. I mean the Baronet and the Rector, not *our* brothers—but the former, who hate each other all the year round, become quite loving at Christmas. I wrote to you last year how the abominable horse-racing Rector was in the habit of preaching clumsy sermons at us at church, and how Sir Pitt snored in answer. When Miss Crawley arrives there is no such thing as quarreling heard of—the hall visits the rectory, and vice versa—the Parson and the Baronet talk about the pigs and the poachers, and the county business, in the most affable manner and without quarreling in their cups, I believe—indeed, Miss Crawley won't hear of their quarreling, and vows that she will leave her money to the Shropshire Crawleys if they offend her. If they were clever people, those Shropshire Crawleys, they might have it all, I think; but the Shropshire Crawley is a clergyman like his Hampshire cousin, and mortally offended Miss Crawley (who had fled thither in a fit of rage against her impracticable brethren) by some straitlaced notions of morality. He would have prayers in the house, I believe.

Our sermon books are shut up when Miss Crawley arrives, and Mr. Pitt, whom she abominates, finds it convenient to go to town. On the other hand, the young dandy—"blood," I believe, is the term—Captain Crawley makes his appearance, and I suppose you will like to know what sort of a person he is.

Well, he is a very large young dandy. He is six feet high, and speaks with a great voice, and swears a great deal, and orders about the servants, who all adore him nevertheless; for he is very generous of his money, and the domestics will do anything for him. Last week the keepers almost killed a bailiff and his man who came down from London to arrest the Captain and who were found lurking about the park wall—they beat them, ducked them, and were going to shoot them for poachers, but the Baronet interfered.

The Captain has a hearty contempt for his father, I can see, and calls him an old *put*, an old *snob*, an old *chawbacon*, and numberless other pretty names. He has a *dreadful reputation* among the ladies. He brings his hunters home with him, lives with the squires of the county, asks whom he pleases to dinner, and Sir Pitt dares not say no for fear of offending Miss Crawley and missing his legacy when she dies of her apoplexy. Shall I tell you a compliment the Captain paid me? I must, it is so pretty. One evening we actually had a dance. There was Sir Huddleston Fuddleston and his family, Sir Giles Wapshot and his young ladies, and I don't know how many more. Well, I heard him say, "By Jove, she's a neat little filly!" meaning your humble servant, and he did me the honor to dance two country dances with me. He gets on pretty gaily with the young squires, with whom he drinks, bets, rides, and talks about hunting and shooting, but he says the country girls are *bores*. Indeed, I don't think he is far wrong. You should see the contempt with which they look down on poor me! When they dance, I sit and play the piano very demurely; but the other night, coming in rather flushed from the dining-room and seeing me employed in this way, he swore out loud that I was the best dancer in the room, and took a great oath that he would have the fiddlers from Mudbury.

"I'll go and play a country dance," said Mrs. Bute Crawley very readily (she is a little, black-faced old woman in a turban, rather crooked, and with very twinkling eyes). And after the Captain and your poor little Rebecca had performed a dance together, do you know she actually did me the honor to compliment me upon my steps! Such a thing was never heard of before—the proud Mrs. Bute Crawley, first cousin to the Earl of Tiptoff, who won't condescend to visit Lady Crawley except when her sister is in the country. Poor Lady Crawley! During most part of these gaieties, she is upstairs taking pills.

Mrs. Bute has all of a sudden taken a great fancy to me. "My dear Miss Sharp," she says, "why not bring over your girls to the rectory? Their cousins will be so happy to see them." I know what she means. Signor Clementi did not teach us the piano for nothing, at which price Mrs. Bute hopes to get a professor for her children. I can see through her schemes

as though she told them to me, but I shall go, as I am determined to make myself agreeable—is it not a poor governess's duty who has not a friend or protector in the world? The Rector's wife paid me a score of compliments about the progress my pupils made, and thought, no doubt, to touch my heart—poor, simple, country soul!—as if I cared a fig about my pupils!

Your India muslin and your pink silk, dearest Amelia, are said to become me very well. They are a good deal worn now, but you know we poor girls can't afford *des fraiches toilettes*. Happy, happy you! who have but to drive to St. James's Street and a dear mother who will give you anything you ask. Farewell, dearest girl.

Your affectionate REBECCA

P.S.—I wish you could have seen the faces of the Misses Blackbrook (Admiral Blackbrook's daughters, my dear), fine young ladies with dresses from London, when Captain Rawdon selected poor me for a partner!

When Mrs. Bute Crawley (whose artifices our ingenious Rebecca had so soon discovered) had procured from Miss Sharp the promise of a visit, she induced the all-powerful Miss Crawley to make the necessary application to Sir Pitt, and the good-natured old lady, who loved to be gay herself and to see everyone gay and happy round about her, was quite charmed, and ready to establish a reconciliation and intimacy between her two brothers. It was therefore agreed that the young people of both families should visit each other frequently for the future, and the friendship of course lasted as long as the jovial old mediatrix was there to keep the peace.

"Why did you ask that scoundrel Rawdon Crawley to dine?" said the Rector to his lady as they were walking home through the park. "*I* don't want the fellow. He looks down upon us country people as so many blackamoors. He's never content unless he gets my yellow-sealed wine, which costs me ten shillings a bottle, hang him! Besides, he's such an infernal character—he's a gambler—he's a drunkard—he's a profligate in every way. He shot a man in a duel—he's over head and ears in debt, and he's robbed me and mine of the best part of Miss Crawley's fortune. Waxy says she has him"—here the Rector shook his fist at the moon with something very like an oath, and added in a melancholious tone "————, down in her will for fifty thousand, and there won't be above thirty to divide. And you ask this villain into your house!" continued the exasperated Rector. "You, the mother of a young family—the wife of a clergyman of the Church of England. By Jove!"

"Bute Crawley, you are a fool," said the Rector's wife scornfully.

"Well, ma'am, fool or not—and I don't say, Martha, I'm so clever as *you* are, I never did. But I won't meet Rawdon Crawley, that's flat. I'll go over to Huddleston, that I will, and see his black greyhound, Mrs. Crawley, and I'll run Lancelot against him for fifty. By Jove, I will, or against any dog in England. But I won't meet that beast Rawdon Crawley."

"Mr. Crawley, you are intoxicated, as usual," replied his wife. And the next morning, when the Rector woke and called for small beer, she put him in mind of his promise to visit Sir Huddleston Fuddleston on Saturday, and as

he knew he should have a *wet night*, it was agreed that he might gallop back again in time for church on Sunday morning. Thus it will be seen that the parishioners of Crawley were equally happy in their Squire and in their Rector.

Miss Crawley had not long been established at the hall before Rebecca's fascinations had won the heart of that good-natured London rake, as they had of the country innocents whom we have been describing. Taking her accustomed drive one day, she thought fit to order that "that little governess" should accompany her to Mudbury. Before they had returned Rebecca had made a conquest of her, having made her laugh four times and amused her during the whole of the little journey.

"Not let Miss Sharp dine at table!" said she to Sir Pitt, who had arranged a dinner of ceremony and asked all the neighboring baronets. "My dear creature, do you suppose I can talk about the nursery with Lady Fuddleston, or discuss Justices' business with that goose old Sir Giles Wapshot? I insist upon Miss Sharp appearing. Let Lady Crawley remain upstairs if there is no room. But little Miss Sharp! Why, she's the only person fit to talk to in the county!"

Of course, after such a peremptory order as this Miss Sharp, the governess, received commands to dine with the illustrious company belowstairs. And when Sir Huddleston had, with great pomp and ceremony, handed Miss Crawley in to dinner, and was preparing to take his place by her side, the old lady cried out in a shrill voice: "Becky Sharp! Miss Sharp! Come you and sit by me and amuse me, and let Sir Huddleston sit by Lady Wapshot."

When the parties were over and the carriages had rolled away, the insatiable Miss Crawley would say, "Come to my dressing room, Becky, and let us abuse the company"—which between them this pair of friends did perfectly. Old Sir Huddleston wheezed a great deal at dinner; Sir Giles Wapshot had a particularly noisy manner of imbibing his soup, and her ladyship a wink of the left eye; all of which Becky caricatured to admiration, as well as the particulars of the night's conversation: the politics; the war; the quarter-sessions; the famous run with the H. H., and those heavy and dreary themes about which country gentlemen converse. As for the Misses Wapshots' toilettes and Lady Fuddleston's famous yellow hat, Miss Sharp tore them to tatters, to the infinite amusement of her audience.

"My dear, you are a perfect *trouvaille*," Miss Crawley would say. "I wish you could come to me in London, but I couldn't make a butt of you as I do of poor Briggs—no, no, you little sly creature, you are too clever—isn't she, Firkin?"

Mrs. Firkin (who was dressing the very small remnant of hair which remained on Miss Crawley's pate) flung up her head and said, "I think Miss *is* very clever," with the most killing, sarcastic air. In fact, Mrs. Firkin had that natural jealousy which is one of the main principles of every honest woman.

After rebuffing Sir Huddleston Fuddleston, Miss Crawley ordered that Rawdon Crawley should lead her in to dinner every day, and that Becky should follow with her cushion—or else she would have Becky's arm and Rawdon with the pillow. "We must sit together," she said. "We're the only three

Christians in the county, my love"—in which case it must be confessed that religion was at a very low ebb in the County of Hants.

Besides being such a fine religionist, Miss Crawley was, as we have said, an ultraliberal in opinions, and always took occasion to express these in the most candid manner.

"What is birth, my dear?" she would say to Rebecca. "Look at my brother Pitt; look at the Huddlestons, who have been here since Henry II; look at poor Bute at the parsonage. Is any one of them equal to you in intelligence or breeding? Equal to *you*—they are not even equal to poor dear Briggs, my companion, or Bowls, my butler. You, my love, are a little paragon—positively a little jewel. You have more brains than half the shire. If merit had its reward you ought to be a duchess—no, there ought to be no duchesses at all, but you ought to have no superior, and I consider you, my love, as my equal in every respect, and—will you put some coals on the fire, my dear, and will you pick this dress of mine and alter it, you who can do it so well?" So this old philanthropist used to make her equal run of her errands, execute her millinery, and read her to sleep with French novels every night.

When Miss Rebecca Sharp wrote to her beloved friend the account of the little ball at Queen's Crawley, and the manner in which for the first time Captain Crawley had distinguished her, she did not, strange to relate, give an altogether accurate account of the transaction. The Captain had distinguished her a great number of times before. The Captain had met her in a half-score of walks. The Captain had lighted upon her in a half-hundred of corridors and passages. The Captain had hung over her piano twenty times of an evening (my lady was now upstairs, being ill, and nobody heeded her) as Miss Sharp sang. The Captain had written her notes (the best that the great blundering dragoon could devise and spell, but dullness gets on as well as any other quality with women). But when he put the first of the notes into the leaves of the song she was singing, the little governess, rising and looking him steadily in the face, took up the triangular missive daintily and waved it about as if it were a cocked hat, and she, advancing to the enemy, popped the note into the fire and made him a very low curtsy, and went back to her place, and began to sing away again more merrily than ever.

"What's that?" said Miss Crawley, interrupted in her after-dinner doze by the stoppage of the music.

"It's a false note," Miss Sharp said, with a laugh, and Rawdon Crawley fumed with rage and mortification.

Seeing the evident partiality of Miss Crawley for the new governess, how good it was of Mrs. Bute Crawley not to be jealous, and to welcome the young lady to the rectory, and not only her, but Rawdon Crawley, her husband's rival in the old maid's five per cents! They became very fond of each other's society, Mrs. Crawley and her nephew. He gave up hunting, he declined entertainments at Fuddleston, he would not dine with the mess of the depot at Mudbury, his great pleasure was to stroll over to Crawley parsonage—whither Miss Crawley came too, and as their mamma was ill, why not the children with Miss Sharp? So the children (little dears!) came with Miss Sharp, and of an

evening some of the party would walk back together. Not Miss Crawley—she preferred her carriage—but the walk over the rectory fields, and in at the little park wicket, and through the dark plantation, and up the checkered avenue to Queen's Crawley was charming in the moonlight to two such lovers of the picturesque as the Captain and Miss Rebecca.

"Oh, those stars, those stars!" Miss Rebecca would say, turning her twinkling green eyes up toward them. "I feel myself almost a spirit when I gaze upon them."

"Oh—ah—gad—yes, so do I exactly, Miss Sharp," the other enthusiast replied. "You don't mind my cigar, do you, Miss Sharp?" Miss Sharp loved the smell of a cigar out of doors beyond everything in the world—and she just tasted one too, in the prettiest way possible, and gave a little puff, and a little scream, and a little giggle, and restored the delicacy to the Captain, who twirled his mustache and straightway puffed it into a blaze that glowed quite red in the dark plantation, and swore, "Jove—aw—gad—aw—it's the finest segaw I ever smoked in the world—aw," for his intellect and conversation were alike brilliant and becoming to a heavy young dragoon.

Old Sir Pitt, who was taking his pipe and beer and talking to John Horrocks about a "ship" that was to be killed, espied the pair so occupied from his study window, and with dreadful oaths swore that if it wasn't for Miss Crawley he'd take Rawdon and bundle 'un out of doors, like a rogue as he was.

"He *be* a bad 'n, sure enough," Mr. Horrocks remarked. "But I think Miss Sharp's a match for 'n, Sir Pitt," he added, after a pause.

And so, in truth, she was—for father and son too.

CHAPTER XI

We must now take leave of Arcadia and those amiable people practicing the rural virtues there, and travel back to London to inquire what has become of Miss Amelia. "We don't care a fig for her," writes some unknown correspondent with a pretty little handwriting and a pink seal to her note.

Has the beloved reader, in his experience of society, never heard similar remarks by good-natured female friends, who always wonder what you *can* see in Miss Smith that is so fascinating, or what *could* induce Major Jones to propose for that silly, insignificant, simpering Miss Thompson, who has nothing but her wax-doll face to recommend her?

The young ladies in Amelia's society did this for her very satisfactorily. For instance, there was scarcely any point upon which the Misses Osborne, George's sisters, and the Mesdemoiselles Dobbin agreed so well as in their estimate of her very trifling merits and their wonder that their brothers could find any charms in her. "We are kind to her," the Misses Osborne said—a pair of fine, black-browed young ladies who had had the best of governesses, masters, and milliners—and they treated her with such extreme kindness and condescension, and patronized her so insufferably, that the poor little thing *was*

in fact perfectly dumb in their presence, and to all outward appearance as stupid as they thought her. She made efforts to like them, as in duty bound, and as sisters of her future husband. She passed "long mornings" with them—the most dreary and serious of forenoons. She drove out solemnly in their great family coach with them and Miss Wirt, their governess, that rawboned vestal. They took her to the ancient concerts by way of a treat, and to the oratorio, and to St. Paul's to see the charity children, where in such terror was she of her friends she almost did not dare be affected by the hymn the children sang. Their house was comfortable, their papa's table rich and handsome, the society solemn and genteel, their self-respect prodigious. All their habits were pompous and orderly, and all their amusements intolerably dull and decorous. After every one of her visits (and oh, how glad she was when they were over!) Miss Osborne and Miss Maria Osborne, and Miss Wirt, the vestal governess, asked each other with increased wonder, "What *could* George find in that creature?"

Miss Wirt and these two affectionate young women so earnestly and frequently impressed upon George Osborne's mind the enormity of the sacrifice he was making, and his romantic generosity in throwing himself away upon Amelia, that I'm not sure but that he really thought he was one of the most deserving characters in the British Army, and gave himself up to be loved with a good deal of easy resignation.

Somehow, although he left home every morning, and dined abroad six days in the week when his sisters believed the infatuated youth to be at Miss Sedley's apron strings, he was *not* always with Amelia while the world supposed him at her feet. Certain it is that on more occasions than one when Captain Dobbin called to look for his friend, Miss Osborne (who was very attentive to the Captain, and anxious to hear his military stories, and to know about the health of his dear mamma) would laughingly point to the opposite side of the square and say: "Oh, you must go to the Sedleys' to ask for George. We never see him from morning till night." At which kind of speech the Captain would laugh in rather an absurd, constrained manner, and turn off the conversation, like a consummate man of the world, to some topic of general interest.

"What an innocent it is, that pet of yours," Miss Maria would then say to Miss Jane upon the Captain's departure. "Did you see how he blushed at the mention of poor George on duty?"

"It's a pity Frederick Bullock hadn't some of his modesty, Maria," replies the elder sister, with a toss of her head.

"Modesty! Awkwardness, you mean, Jane. I don't want Frederick to trample a hole in my muslin frock as Captain Dobbin did in yours at Mrs. Perkins'."

"In *your* frock, he, he! How could he? Wasn't he dancing with Amelia?"

The fact is, when Captain Dobbin blushed so and looked so awkward, he remembered a circumstance of which he did not think it was necessary to inform the young ladies, viz., that he had been calling at Mr. Sedley's house already, on the pretense of seeing George, of course, and George wasn't there, only poor little Amelia, with rather a sad, wistful face, seated near the drawing-room window, who, after some very trifling, stupid talk, ventured to ask was

there any truth in the report that the regiment was soon to be ordered abroad, and had Captain Dobbin seen Mr. Osborne that day?

The regiment was not ordered abroad as yet, and Captain Dobbin had not seen George. He was with his sister, most likely, the Captain said. Should he go and fetch the truant? So she gave him her hand kindly and gratefully, and he crossed the square; and she waited and waited, but George never came.

We have talked of shift, self, and poverty as those dismal instructors under whom poor Miss Becky Sharp got her education. Now love was Miss Amelia Sedley's last tutoress, and it was amazing what progress our young lady made under that popular teacher. In the course of fifteen or eighteen months' daily and constant attention to this eminent finishing governess, what a deal of secrets Amelia learned, which Miss Wirt and the black-eyed young ladies over the way, which old Miss Pinkerton of Chiswick herself, had no cognizance of! As, indeed, how should any of those prim and reputable virgins? Miss Maria Osborne, it is true, was "attached" to Mr. Frederick Augustus Bullock, of the firm of Hulker, Bullock & Bullock; but hers was a most respectable attachment, and she would have taken Bullock Senior just the same, her mind being fixed—as that of a well-bred young woman should be—upon a house in Park Lane, a country house at Wimbledon, a handsome chariot and two prodigious tall horses and footmen, and a fourth of the annual profits of the eminent firm of Hulker & Bullock, all of which advantages were represented in the person of Frederick Augustus.

This was not the sort of love that finished Amelia's education, and in the course of a year turned a good young girl into a good young woman—to be a good wife presently, when the happy time should come. This young person (perhaps it was very imprudent in her parents to encourage her and abet her in such idolatry and silly romantic ideas) loved, with all her heart, the young officer in His Majesty's service with whom we have made a brief acquaintance. She thought about him the very first moment on waking, and his was the very last name mentioned in her prayers. She never had seen a man so beautiful or so clever, such a figure on horseback, such a dancer, such a hero in general. Talk of the Prince's bow! What was it to George's? She had seen Mr. Brummell, whom everybody praised so. Compare such a person as that to her George! Not among all the beaux at the opera (and there were beaux in those days with actual opera hats) was there anyone to equal him. He was only good enough to be a fairy prince, and oh, what magnanimity to stoop to such a humble Cinderella! Miss Pinkerton would have tried to check this blind devotion, very likely, had she been Amelia's confidante, but not with much success, depend upon it. It is in the nature and instinct of some women. Some are made to scheme, and some to love, and I wish any respected bachelor that reads this may take the sort that best likes him.

What were her parents doing, not to keep this little heart from beating so fast? Old Sedley did not seem much to notice matters. He was graver of late, and his City affairs absorbed him. Mrs. Sedley was of so easy and uninquisitive a nature that she wasn't even jealous. Mr. Jos was away, being besieged by an Irish widow at Cheltenham. Amelia had the house to herself—ah! too much

to herself sometimes. Not that she ever doubted, for to be sure George must be at the Horse Guards, and he can't always get leave from Chatham, and he must see his friends and sisters and mingle in society when in town, and when he is with the regiment, he is too tired to write long letters.

But if Osborne's were short and soldierlike letters, it must be confessed that were Miss Sedley's letters to Mr. Osborne to be published, we should have to extend this novel to such a multiplicity of volumes as not the most sentimental reader could support; that she not only filled large sheets of paper, but crossed them with the most astonishing perverseness; that she wrote whole pages out of poetry books without the least pity; that she underlined words and passages with quite a frantic emphasis; and, in fine, gave the usual tokens of her condition. She wasn't a heroine. Her letters *were* full of repetition. She wrote rather doubtful grammar sometimes, and in her verses took all sorts of liberties with the meter. But oh, mesdames, if you are not allowed to touch the heart sometimes in spite of syntax, and are not to be loved until you all know the difference between trimeter and tetrameter, may all poetry go to the deuce, and every schoolmaster perish miserably!

CHAPTER XII

I FEAR the gentleman to whom Miss Amelia's letters were addressed was rather an obdurate critic. Such a number of notes followed Lieutenant Osborne about the country that he became almost ashamed of the jokes of his messroom companions regarding them, and ordered his servant never to deliver them except in his private apartment. He was seen lighting his cigar with one, to the horror of Captain Dobbin, who it is my belief would have given a banknote for the document.

For some time George strove to keep the liaison a secret. There *was* a woman in the case, that he admitted. "And not the first either," said Ensign Spooney to Ensign Stubble. "That Osborne's a devil of a fellow. There was a judge's daughter at Demerara went almost mad about him. Then there was that beautiful quadroon girl, Miss Pye, at St. Vincent's, you know, and since he's been home, they say he's a regular Don Giovanni, by Jove."

Stubble and Spooney thought that to be a "regular Don Giovanni, by Jove," was one of the finest qualities a man could possess, and Osborne's reputation was prodigious among the young men of the regiment. He was famous in field sports, famous at a song, famous on parade, free with his money, which was bountifully supplied by his father. His coats were better-made than any man's in the regiment, and he had more of them. He was adored by the men. He could drink more than any officer of the whole mess, including old Heavytop, the Colonel. He could spar better than Knuckles, the private (who would have been a corporal but for his drunkenness, and who had been in the prize ring), and was the best batter and bowler, out and out, of the regimental club. He rode his own horse, Greased Lightning, and won the Garrison Cup at the

Quebec races. There were other people besides Amelia who worshiped him. Stubble and Spooney thought him a sort of Apollo, Dobbin took him to be an Admirable Crichton, and Mrs. Major O'Dowd acknowledged he was an elegant young fellow.

Well, Stubble and Spooney and the rest indulged in most romantic conjectures regarding this female correspondent of Osborne's—opining that it was a duchess in London who was in love with him; or that it was a general's daughter who was engaged to somebody else and madly attached to him; or that it was a Member of Parliament's lady, who proposed four horses and an elopement; or that it was some other victim of a passion delightfully exciting, romantic, and disgraceful to all parties—on none of which conjectures would Osborne throw the least light, leaving his young admirers and friends to invent and arrange their whole history.

And the real state of the case would never have been known at all in the regiment but for Captain Dobbin's indiscretion. The Captain was eating his breakfast one day in the messroom while Cackle, the assistant surgeon, and the two above-named worthies were speculating upon Osborne's intrigue—Stubble holding out that the lady was a duchess about Queen Charlotte's Court and Cackle vowing she was an opera singer of the worst reputation. At this idea Dobbin became so moved that though his mouth was full of eggs and bread and butter at the time, and though he ought not to have spoken at all, yet he couldn't help blurting out: "Cackle, you're a stupid fool. You're always talking nonsense and scandal. Osborne is not going to run off with a duchess or ruin a milliner. Miss Sedley is one of the most charming young women that ever lived. He's been engaged to her ever so long, and the man who calls her names had better not do so in my hearing." With which, turning exceedingly red, Dobbin ceased speaking and almost choked himself with a cup of tea. The story was over the regiment in half an hour, and that very evening Mrs. Major O'Dowd wrote off to her sister Glorvina at O'Dowdstown not to hurry from Dublin, young Osborne being prematurely engaged already.

She complimented the Lieutenant in an appropriate speech over a glass of whisky toddy that evening, and he went home perfectly furious to quarrel with Dobbin (who had declined Mrs. Major O'Dowd's party, and sat in his own room playing the flute, and, I believe, writing poetry, in a very melancholy manner)—to quarrel with Dobbin for betraying his secret.

"Who the deuce asked you to talk about my affairs?" Osborne shouted indignantly. "Why the devil is all the regiment to know that I am going to be married? Why is that tattling old harridan, Peggy O'Dowd, to make free with my name at her damned supper table, and advertise my engagement over the three kingdoms? After all, what right have you to say I *am* engaged, or to meddle in my business at all, Dobbin?"

"It seems to me——" Captain Dobbin began.

"Seems be hanged," his junior interrupted him. "I am under obligations to you, I know it, a damned deal too well too, but I won't be always sermonized by you because you're five years my senior. I'm hanged if I'll stand your airs of

superiority and infernal pity and patronage. Pity and patronage! I should like to know in what I'm your inferior!"

"Are you engaged?" Captain Dobbin interposed.

"What the devil's that to you or anyone here if I am?"

"Are you ashamed of it?" Dobbin resumed.

"What right have you to ask me that question, sir? I should like to know," George said.

"Good God, you don't mean to say you want to break off?" asked Dobbin, starting up.

"In other words, you ask me if I'm a man of honor," said Osborne fiercely. "Is that what you mean? You've adopted such a tone regarding me lately that I'm damned if I'll bear it any more."

"What have I done? I've told you you were neglecting a sweet girl, George. I've told you that when you go to town you ought to go to her, and not to the gambling houses about St. James's."

"You want your money back, I suppose," said George, with a sneer.

"Of course I do—I always did, didn't I?" says Dobbin. "You speak like a generous fellow."

"No, hang it, William, I beg your pardon," here George interposed in a fit of remorse. "You *have* been my friend in a hundred ways, heaven knows. You've got me out of a score of scrapes. When Crawley of the Guards won that sum of money of me I should have been done but for you, I know I should. But you shouldn't deal so hardly with me, you shouldn't be always catechizing me. I *am* very fond of Amelia, I adore her, and that sort of thing. Don't look angry. She's faultless, I know she is. But you see there's no fun in winning a thing unless you play for it. Hang it, the regiment's just back from the West Indies. I must have a little fling, and then when I'm married I'll reform, I will upon my honor, now. And—I say—Dob—don't be angry with me, and I'll give you a hundred next month, when I know my father will stand something handsome. And I'll ask Heavytop for leave and I'll go to town and see Amelia tomorrow—there now, will *that* satisfy you?"

"It is impossible to be long angry with you, George," said the good-natured Captain, "and as for the money, old boy, you know if I wanted it you'd share your last shilling with me."

"That I would, by Jove, Dobbin," George said, with the greatest generosity—though, by the way, he never had any money to spare.

"Only I wish you had sown those wild oats of yours, George. If you could have seen poor little Miss Emmy's face when she asked me about you the other day, you would have pitched those billiard balls to the deuce. Go and comfort her, you rascal. Go and write her a long letter. Do something to make her happy, a very little will."

"I believe she's damned fond of me," the Lieutenant said with a self-satisfied air, and went off to finish the evening with some jolly fellows in the messroom.

Amelia meanwhile, in Russell Square, was looking at the moon, which was shining upon that peaceful spot as well as upon the square of the Chatham barracks where Lieutenant Osborne was quartered, and thinking to herself how

her hero was employed. Perhaps he is visiting the sentries, thought she, perhaps he is bivouacking, perhaps he is attending the couch of a wounded comrade, or studying the art of war up in his own desolate chamber. And her kind thoughts sped away as if they were angels and had wings, and flying down the river to Chatham and Rochester, strove to peep into the barracks where George was. . . . All things considered, I think it was as well the gates were shut and the sentry allowed no one to pass, so that the poor little white-robed angel could not hear the songs those young fellows were roaring over the whisky punch.

The day after the little conversation at Chatham barracks, young Osborne, to show that he would be as good as his word, prepared to go to town, thereby incurring Captain Dobbin's applause. "I should have liked to make her a little present," Osborne said to his friend in confidence, "only I am quite out of cash until my father tips up." But Dobbin would not allow this good nature and generosity to be balked, and so accommodated Mr. Osborne with a few pound notes, which the latter took after a little faint scruple.

And I dare say he would have bought something very handsome for Amelia, only, getting off the coach in Fleet Street, he was attracted by a handsome shirt pin in a jeweler's window which he could not resist, and having paid for that had very little money to spare for indulging in any further exercise of kindness. Never mind. You may be sure it was not his presents Amelia wanted. When he came to Russell Square, her face lighted up as if he had been sunshine. The little cares, fears, tears, timid misgivings, sleepless fancies of I don't know how many days and nights, were forgotten under one moment's influence of that familiar, irresistible smile. He beamed on her from the drawing-room door—magnificent, with ambrosial whiskers, like a god. Sambo, whose face as he announced Captain Osbin (having conferred a brevet rank on that young officer) blazed with a sympathetic grin, saw the little girl start, and flush, and jump up from her watching place in the window. And Sambo retreated, and as soon as the door was shut, she went fluttering to Lieutenant George Osborne's heart as if it was the only natural home for her to nestle in. Oh, thou poor panting little soul! The very finest tree in the whole forest, with the straightest stem and the strongest arms and the thickest foliage, wherein you choose to build and coo, may be marked, for what you know, and may be down with a crash ere long. What an old, old simile that is, between man and timber!

In the meanwhile, George kissed her very kindly on her forehead and glistening eyes, and was very gracious and good, and she thought his diamond shirt pin (which she had not known him to wear before) the prettiest ornament ever seen.

The observant reader who has marked our young Lieutenant's previous behavior, and has preserved our report of the brief conversation which he has just had with Captain Dobbin, has possibly come to certain conclusions regarding the character of Mr. Osborne. Some cynical Frenchman has said that there are two parties to a love transaction: the one who loves and the other who condescends to be so treated. Perhaps the love is occasionally on the man's side, perhaps on the lady's. Perhaps some infatuated swain has ere this mistaken

insensibility for modesty, dullness for maiden reserve, mere vacuity for sweet bashfulness, and a goose, in a word, for a swan. But this is certain, that Amelia believed her lover to be one of the most gallant and brilliant men in the empire, and it is possible Lieutenant Osborne thought so too.

He was a little wild—how many young men are, and don't girls like a rake better than a milksop? He hadn't sown his wild oats as yet, but he would soon, and quit the army now that peace was proclaimed, the Corsican monster locked up at Elba, promotion, by consequence, over, and no chance left for the display of his undoubted military talents and valor. And his allowance, with Amelia's settlement, would enable them to take a snug place in the country somewhere, in a good sporting neighborhood, and he would hunt a little and farm a little, and they would be very happy. As for remaining in the army as a married man, that was impossible. Fancy Mrs. George Osborne in lodgings in a country town, or worse still, in the East or West Indies, with a society of officers and patronized by Mrs. Major O'Dowd! Amelia died with laughing at Osborne's stories about Mrs. Major O'Dowd. He loved her much too fondly to subject her to that horrid woman and her vulgarities, and the rough treatment of a soldier's wife. He didn't care for himself—not he. But his dear little girl should take the place in society to which as his wife she was entitled, and to these proposals you may be sure she acceded, as she would to any other from the same author.

Holding this kind of conversation, and building numberless castles in the air (which Amelia adorned with all sorts of flower gardens, rustic walks, country churches, Sunday schools, and the like, while George had his mind's eye directed to the stables and kennel and the cellar), this young pair passed away a couple of hours very pleasantly. And as the Lieutenant had only that single day in town, and a great deal of most important business to transact, it was proposed that Miss Emmy should dine with her future sisters-in-law. This invitation was accepted joyfully. He conducted her to his sisters, where he left her talking and prattling in a way that astonished those ladies, who thought that George might make something of her, and he then went off to transact his business.

In a word, he went out and ate ices at a pastry cook's shop in Charing Cross, tried a new coat in Pall Mall, dropped in at the Old Slaughters' and called for Captain Cannon, played eleven games at billiards with the Captain, of which he won eight, and returned to Russell Square half an hour late for dinner, but in very good humor.

It was not so with old Mr. Osborne. When that gentleman came from the city and was welcomed in the drawing-room by his daughters and the elegant Miss Wirt, they saw at once by his face—which was puffy, solemn, and yellow at the best of times—and by the scowl and twitching of his black eyebrows, that the heart within his large white waistcoat was disturbed and uneasy. When Amelia stepped forward to salute him, which she always did with great trembling and timidity, he gave a surly grunt of recognition and dropped the little hand out of his great hirsute paw without any attempt to hold it there. He looked round gloomily at his eldest daughter, who, comprehending the mean-

ing of his look, which asked unmistakably, "Why the devil is *she* here?" said at once:

"George is in town, Papa, and has gone to the Horse Guards, and will be back to dinner."

"Oh, he is, is he? I won't have the dinner kept waiting for *him,* Jane." With which this worthy man lapsed into his particular chair, and then the utter silence in his genteel, well-furnished drawing-room was only interrupted by the alarmed ticking of the great French clock.

When that chronometer, which was surmounted by a cheerful brass group of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, tolled five in a heavy cathedral tone, Mr. Osborne pulled the bell at his right hand violently, and the butler rushed up.

"Dinner!" roared Mr. Osborne.

"Mr. George isn't come in, sir," interposed the man.

"Damn Mr. George, sir. Am I master of the house? *Dinner!*" Mr. Osborne scowled. Amelia trembled. A telegraphic communication of eyes passed between the other three ladies. The obedient bell in the lower regions began ringing the announcement of the meal. The tolling over, the head of the family thrust his hands into the great tail pockets of his great blue coat and brass buttons, and without waiting for a further announcement strode downstairs alone, scowling over his shoulder at the four females.

"What's the matter now, my dear?" asked one of the other as they rose and tripped gingerly behind the sire.

"I suppose the funds are falling," whispered Miss Wirt, and so, trembling and in silence, this hushed female company followed their dark leader. They took their places in silence. He growled out a blessing, which sounded as gruffly as a curse. The great silver dish covers were removed. Amelia trembled in her place, for she was next to the awful Osborne and alone on her side of the table—the gap being occasioned by the absence of George.

"Soup?" says Mr. Osborne, clutching the ladle, fixing his eyes on her, in a sepulchral tone, and having helped her and the rest, did not speak for a while.

"Take Miss Sedley's plate away," at last he said. "She can't eat the soup—no more can I. It's beastly. Take away the soup, Hicks, and tomorrow turn the cook out of the house, Jane."

Having concluded his observations upon the soup, Mr. Osborne made a few curt remarks respecting the fish, also of a savage and satirical tendency, and cursed Billingsgate with an emphasis quite worthy of the place. Then he lapsed into silence and swallowed sundry glasses of wine, looking more and more terrible till a brisk knock at the door told of George's arrival, when everybody began to rally.

"He could not come before. General Daguilet had kept him waiting at the Horse Guards. Never mind soup or fish. Give him anything—he didn't care what. Capital mutton—capital everything." His good humor contrasted with his father's severity, and he rattled on unceasingly during dinner, to the delight of all—of one especially, who need not be mentioned.

As soon as the young ladies had discussed the orange and the glass of wine which formed the ordinary conclusion of the dismal banquets at Mr. Osborne's

house, the signal to make sail for the drawing-room was given, and they all arose and departed. Amelia hoped George would soon join them there. She began playing some of his favorite waltzes (then newly imported) at the great carved-legged, leather-cased grand piano in the drawing-room overhead. This little artifice did not bring him. He was deaf to the waltzes, they grew fainter and fainter, the discomfited performer left the huge instrument presently. And though her three friends performed some of the loudest and most brilliant new pieces of their repertoire, she did not hear a single note, but sat thinking, and boding evil. Old Osborne's scowl, terrific always, had never looked so deadly to her. His eyes followed her out of the room as if she had been guilty of something. When they brought her coffee, she started as though it were a cup of poison which Mr. Hicks, the butler, wished to propose to her.

The gloom on the paternal countenance had also impressed George Osborne with anxiety. With such eyebrows, and a look so decidedly bilious, how was he to extract that money from the Governor of which George was consumedly in want? He began praising his father's wine. That was generally a successful means of cajoling the old gentleman.

"We never got such Madeira in the West Indies, sir, as yours. Colonel Heavytop took off three bottles of that you sent me down, under his belt the other day."

"Did he?" said the old gentleman. "It stands me in eight shillings a bottle."

"Will you take six guineas a dozen for it, sir?" said George, with a laugh. "There's one of the greatest men in the kingdom wants some."

"Does he?" growled the senior. "Wish he may get it."

"When General Daguilet was at Chatham, sir, Heavytop gave him a breakfast and asked me for some of the wine. The General liked it just as well—wanted a pipe for the Commander in Chief. He's his Royal Highness's right-hand man."

"It *is* devilish fine wine," said the Eyebrows, and they looked more good-humored. And George was going to take advantage of this complacency and bring the supply question on the mahogany when the father, relapsing into solemnity, though rather cordial in manner, bade him ring the bell for claret. "And we'll see if that's as good as the Madeira, George, to which his Royal Highness is welcome, I'm sure. And as we are drinking it, I'll talk to you about a matter of importance."

Amelia heard the claret bell ringing as she sat nervously upstairs. She thought, somehow, it was a mysterious and presentimental bell. Of the presentiments which some people are always having, *some* surely must come right.

"What I want to know, George," the old gentleman said, after slowly smacking his first bumper—"what I want to know is, how you and—ah—that little thing upstairs are carrying on?"

"I think, sir, it's not hard to see," George said, with a self-satisfied grin. "Pretty clear, sir. What capital wine!"

"What d'you mean, pretty clear, sir?"

"Why, hang it, sir, don't push me too hard. I'm a modest man. I—ah—I don't

set up to be a lady-killer, but I do own that she's as devilish fond of me as she can be. Anybody can see that with half an eye."

"And you yourself?"

"Why, sir, didn't you order me to marry her, and ain't I a good boy? Haven't our papas settled it ever so long?"

"A pretty boy, indeed. Haven't I heard of your doings, sir, with Lord Tarquin, Captain Crawley of the Guards, the Honorable Mr. Deuceace, and that set? Have a care, sir, have a care."

The old gentleman pronounced these aristocratic names with the greatest gusto. Whenever he met a great man he groveled before him, and my-lorded him as only a freeborn Briton can do. He came home and looked out his history in the *Peerage*, he introduced his name into his daily conversations, he bragged about his lordship to his daughters. He fell down prostrate and basked in him as a Neapolitan beggar does in the sun. George was alarmed when he heard the names. He feared his father might have been informed of certain transactions at play. But the old moralist eased him by saying serenely:

"Well, well, young men will be young men. And the comfort to me is, George, that living in the best society in England, as I hope you do, as I think you do, as my means will allow you to do——"

"Thank you, sir," says George, making his point at once. "One can't live with these great folks for nothing, and my purse, sir—look at it." And he held up a little token which had been netted by Amelia, and contained the very last of Dobbin's pound notes.

"You sha'n't want, sir. The British merchant's son sha'n't want, sir. My guineas are as good as theirs, George, my boy, and I don't grudge 'em. Call on Mr. Chopper as you go through the City tomorrow, he'll have something for you. I don't grudge money when I know you're in good society, because I know that good society can never go wrong. There's no pride in me. I was a humbly born man—but you have had advantages. Make a good use of 'em. Mix with the young nobility. There's many of 'em who can't spend a dollar to your guinea, my boy. And as for the pink bonnets, why, boys will be boys. Only there's one thing I order you to avoid, which, if you do not, I'll cut you off with a shilling, by Jove, and that's gambling, sir."

"Oh, of course, sir," said George.

"But to return to the other business about Amelia. Why shouldn't you marry higher than a stockbroker's daughter, George—that's what I want to know."

"It's a family business, sir," says George, cracking filberts. "You and Mr. Sedley made the match a hundred years ago."

"I don't deny it, but people's positions alter, sir. I don't deny that Sedley made my fortune, or rather put me in the way of acquiring by my own talents and genius that proud position which, I may say, I occupy in the tallow trade and the City of London. I've shown my gratitude to Sedley, and he's tried it of late, sir, as my checkbook can show. George! I tell you in confidence I don't like the looks of Mr. Sedley's affairs. My chief clerk, Mr. Chopper, does not like the looks of 'em, and he's an old file and knows 'Change as well as any

man in London. Hulker & Bullock are looking shy at him. He's been dabbling on his own account, I fear. They say the *Jeune Amélie* was his, which was taken by the Yankee privateer *Molasses*. And that's flat—unless I see Amelia's ten thousand down, you don't marry her. I'll have no lame duck's daughter in my family. Pass the wine, sir—or ring for coffee."

With which Mr. Osborne spread out the evening paper, and George knew from this signal that the colloquy was ended, and that his papa was about to take a nap.

He hurried upstairs to Amelia in the highest spirits. What was it that made him more attentive to her on that night than he had been for a long time—more eager to amuse her, more tender, more brilliant in talk? Was it that his generous heart warmed to her at the prospect of misfortune, or that the idea of losing the dear little prize made him value it more? She lived upon the recollections of that happy evening for many days afterward, remembering his words, his looks, the song he sang, his attitude as he leaned over her or looked at her from a distance. As it seemed to her, no night ever passed so quickly at Mr. Osborne's house before, and for once this young person was almost provoked to be angry by the premature arrival of Mr. Sambo with her shawl.

George came and took a tender leave of her the next morning, and then hurried off to the City, where he visited Mr. Chopper, his father's headman, and received from that gentleman a document which he exchanged at Hulker & Bullock's for a whole pocketful of money. As George entered the house, old John Sedley was passing out of the banker's parlor looking very dismal. But his godson was much too elated to mark the worthy stockbroker's depression, or the dreary eyes which the kind old gentleman cast upon him. Young Bullock did not come grinning out of the parlor with him, as had been his wont in former years.

And as the swinging doors of Hulker, Bullock & Co. closed upon Mr. Sedley, Mr. Quill, the cashier (whose benevolent occupation it is to hand out crisp banknotes from a drawer and dispense sovereigns out of a copper shovel), winked at Mr. Driver, the clerk at the desk on his right. Mr. Driver winked again.

"No go," Mr. D whispered.

"Not at no price," Mr. Q said. "Mr. George Osborne, sir, how will you take it?" George crammed eagerly a quantity of notes into his pockets, and paid Dobbin fifty pounds that very evening at mess.

That very evening Amelia wrote him the tenderest of long letters. Her heart was overflowing with tenderness, but it still foreboded evil. What was the cause of Mr. Osborne's dark looks? she asked. Had any difference arisen between him and her papa? Her poor papa returned so melancholy from the City that all were alarmed about him at home—in fine, there were four pages of love and fears and hopes and forebodings.

"Poor little Emmy—dear little Emmy. How fond she is of me!" George said as he perused the missive. "And, gad, what a headache that mixed punch has given me!" Poor little Emmy indeed.

CHAPTER XIII

About this time there drove up to an exceedingly snug and well-appointed house in Park Lane a traveling chariot with a lozenge on the panels, a discontented female in a green veil and crimped curls on the rumble, and a large and confidential man on the box. It was the equipage of our friend Miss Crawley, returning from Hants. The carriage windows were shut. The fat spaniel whose head and tongue ordinarily lolled out of one of them reposed on the lap of the discontented female. When the vehicle stopped, a large round bundle of shawls was taken out of the carriage by the aid of various domestics and a young lady who accompanied the heap of cloaks. That bundle contained Miss Crawley, who was conveyed upstairs forthwith and put into a bed and chamber warmed properly as for the reception of an invalid. Messengers went off for her physician and medical man. They came, consulted, prescribed, vanished. The young companion of Miss Crawley at the conclusion of the interview came in to receive their instructions, and administered those antiphlogistic medicines which the eminent men ordered.

Captain Crawley of the Life Guards rode up from Knightsbridge Barracks the next day, his black charger pawed the straw before his invalid aunt's door. He was most affectionate in his inquiries regarding that amiable relative. There seemed to be much source of apprehension. He found Miss Crawley's maid (the discontented female) unusually sulky and despondent. He found Miss Briggs, her dame de compagnie, in tears alone in the drawing-room. She had hastened home, hearing of her beloved friend's illness. She wished to fly to her couch, that couch which she, Briggs, had so often smoothed in the hour of sickness. She was denied admission to Miss Crawley's apartment. A stranger was administering her medicines—a stranger from the country—an odious Miss—— Tears choked the utterance of the dame de compagnie, and she buried her crushed affections and her poor old red nose in her pocket handkerchief.

Rawdon Crawley sent up his name by the sulky femme de chambre, and Miss Crawley's new companion, coming tripping down from the sickroom, put a little hand into his as he stepped forward eagerly to meet her, gave a glance of great scorn at the bewildered Briggs, and beckoning the young Guardsman out of the back drawing-room, led him downstairs into that now desolate dining-parlor where so many a good dinner had been celebrated.

Here these two talked for ten minutes, discussing, no doubt, the symptoms of the old invalid upstairs. At the end of which period the parlor bell was rung briskly, and answered on that instant by Mr. Bowls, Miss Crawley's large, confidential butler (who, indeed, happened to be at the keyhole during the most part of the interview); and the Captain coming out curling his mustachios, mounted the black charger pawing among the straw, to the admiration of the little blackguard boys collected in the street. He looked in at the dining-room window, managing his horse, which curveted and capered beautifully; for one

instant the young person might be seen at the window, when her figure vanished, and doubtless she went upstairs again to resume the affecting duties of benevolence.

Who could this young woman be, I wonder? That evening a little dinner for two persons was laid in the dining-room, when Mrs. Firkin, the lady's maid, pushed into her mistress's apartment, and bustled about there during the vacancy occasioned by the departure of the new nurse, and the latter and Miss Briggs sat down to the neat little meal.

Briggs was so much choked by emotion that she could hardly take a morsel of meat. The young person carved a fowl with the utmost delicacy, and asked so distinctly for egg sauce that poor Briggs, before whom that delicious condiment was placed, started, made a great clattering with the ladle, and once more fell back in the most gushing, hysterical state.

"Had you not better give Miss Briggs a glass of wine?" said the person to Mr. Bowls, the large, confidential man. He did so. Briggs seized it mechanically, gasped it down convulsively, moaned a little, and began to play with the chicken on her plate.

"I think we shall be able to help each other," said the person with great suavity, "and shall have no need of Mr. Bowls's kind services. Mr. Bowls, if you please, we will ring when we want you." He went downstairs, where, by the way, he vented the most horrid curses upon the unoffending footman, his subordinate.

"It is a pity you take on so, Miss Briggs," the young lady said with a cool, slightly sarcastic air.

"My dearest friend is so ill, and wo—o—o—on't see me," gurgled out Briggs in an agony of renewed grief.

"She's not very ill any more. Console yourself, dear Miss Briggs. She has only overeaten herself—that is all. She is greatly better. She will soon be quite restored again. She is weak from being cupped and from medical treatment, but she will rally immediately. Pray console yourself, and take a little more wine."

"But why, why won't she see me again?" Miss Briggs bleated out. "Oh, Matilda, Matilda, after three-and-twenty years' tenderness! Is this the return to your poor, poor Arabella?"

"Don't cry too much, poor Arabella," the other said (with ever so little of a grin). "She only won't see you because she says you don't nurse her as well as I do. It's no pleasure to me to sit up all night. I wish you might do it instead."

"Have I not tended that dear couch for years?" Arabella said, "and now—"

"Now she prefers somebody else. Well, sick people have these fancies, and must be humored. When she's well I shall go."

"Never, never!" Arabella exclaimed, madly inhaling her salts bottle.

"Never be well or never go, Miss Briggs?" the other said with the same provoking good nature. "Pooh—she will be well in a fortnight, when I shall go back to my little pupils at Queen's Crawley, and to their mother, who is a great deal more sick than our friend. You need not be jealous about me, my

dear Miss Briggs. I am a poor little girl without any friends or any harm in me. I don't want to supplant you in Miss Crawley's good graces. She will forget me a week after I am gone, and her affection for you has been the work of years. Give me a little wine, if you please, my dear Miss Briggs, and let us be friends. I'm sure I want friends."

The placable and softhearted Briggs speechlessly pushed out her hand at this appeal, but she felt the desertion most keenly for all that, and bitterly, bitterly moaned the fickleness of her Matilda. At the end of half an hour, the meal over, Miss Rebecca Sharp (for such, astonishing to state, is the name of her who has been described ingeniously as "the person" hitherto) went upstairs again to her patient's rooms, from which, with the most engaging politeness, she eliminated poor Firkin. "Thank you, Miss Firkin, that will quite do. How nicely you make it! I will ring when anything is wanted. Thank you." And Firkin came downstairs in a tempest of jealousy, only the more dangerous because she was forced to confine it in her own bosom.

Could it be the tempest which, as she passed the landing of the first floor, blew open the drawing-room door? No, it was stealthily opened by the hand of Briggs. Briggs had been on the watch. Briggs too well heard the creaking Firkin descend the stairs, and the clink of the spoon and gruel basin the neglected female carried.

"Well, Firkin?" says she as the other entered the apartment. "Well, Jane?"

"Wuss and wuss, Miss B," Firkin said, wagging her head.

"Is she not better then?"

"She never spoke but once, and I asked her if she felt a little more easy, and she told me to hold my stupid tongue. Oh, Miss B, I never thought to have seen *this* day!" And the waterworks again began to play.

"What sort of a person is this Miss Sharp, Firkin? I little thought while enjoying my Christmas revels in the elegant home of my firm friends, the Reverend Lionel Delamere and his amiable lady, to find a stranger had taken my place in the affections of my dearest, my still dearest Matilda!" Miss Briggs, it will be seen by her language, was of a literary and sentimental turn, and had once published a volume of poems—*Trills of the Nightingale*—by subscription.

"Miss B, they are all infatyated about that young woman," Firkin replied. "Sir Pitt wouldn't have let her go but he daredn't refuse Miss Crawley anythink. Mrs. Bute at the rectory is jist as bad—never happy out of her sight. The Capting quite wild about her. Mr. Crawley mortial jealous. Since Miss C was took ill, she won't have nobody near her but Miss Sharp, I can't tell for where nor for why, and I think somethink has bewidged everybody."

Rebecca passed that night in constant watching upon Miss Crawley. The next night the old lady slept so comfortably that Rebecca had time for several hours' comfortable repose herself on the sofa at the foot of her patroness's bed. Very soon Miss Crawley was so well that she sat up and laughed heartily at a perfect imitation of Miss Briggs and her grief, which Rebecca described to her. Briggs's weeping snuffle and her manner of using the handkerchief were so completely rendered that Miss Crawley became quite cheerful, to the admiration of the doctors when they visited her, who usually found this worthy

woman of the world, when the least sickness attacked her, under the most abject depression and terror of death.

Captain Crawley came every day and received bulletins from Miss Rebecca respecting his aunt's health. This improved so rapidly that poor Briggs was allowed to see her patroness, and persons with tender hearts may imagine the smothered emtions of that sentimental female and the affecting nature of the interview.

Miss Crawley liked to have Briggs in a good deal soon. Rebecca used to mimic her to her face with the most admirable gravity, thereby rendering the imitation doubly piquant to her worthy patroness.

The causes which had led to the deplorable illness of Miss Crawley, and her departure from her brother's house in the country, were of such an unromantic nature that they are hardly fit to be explained in this genteel and sentimental novel. For how is it possible to hint of a delicate female, living in good society, that she ate and drank too much, and that a hot supper of lobsters, profusely enjoyed at the rectory, was the reason of an indisposition which Miss Crawley herself persisted was solely attributable to the dampness of the weather? The attack was so sharp that Matilda—as His Reverence expressed it—was very nearly "off the hooks." All the family were in a fever of expectation regarding the will, and Rawdon Crawley was making sure of at least forty thousand pounds before the commencement of the London season. Mr. Crawley sent over a choice parcel of tracts, to prepare her for the change from Vanity Fair and Park Lane for another world. But a good doctor from Southampton, being called in in time, vanquished the lobster which was so nearly fatal to her, and gave her sufficient strength to enable her to return to London. The Baronet did not disguise his exceeding mortification at the turn which affairs took.

While everybody was attending on Miss Crawley, and messengers every hour from the rectory were carrying news of her health to the affectionate folks there, there was a lady in another part of the house being exceedingly ill of whom no one took any notice at all, and this was the lady of Crawley herself. The good doctor shook his head after seeing her, to which visit Sir Pitt consented as it could be paid without a fee, and she was left fading away in her lonely chamber with no more heed paid to her than to a weed in the park.

The young ladies, too, lost much of the inestimable benefit of their governess's instruction. So affectionate a nurse was Miss Sharp that Miss Crawley would take her medicines from no other hand. Firkin had been deposed long before her mistress's departure from the country. That faithful attendant found a gloomy consolation, on returning to London, in seeing Miss Briggs suffer the same pangs of jealousy and undergo the same faithless treatment to which she herself had been subject.

Captain Rawdon got an extension of leave on his aunt's illness, and remained dutifully at home. He was always in her antechamber. (She lay sick in the state bedroom, into which you entered by the little blue saloon.) His father was always meeting him there, or if he came down the corridor ever so quietly, his father's door was sure to open and the hyena face of the old gentleman to glare out. What was it set one to watch the other so? A generous rivalry, no

doubt, as to which should be most attentive to the dear sufferer in the state bedroom. Rebecca used to come out and comfort both of them—or one or the other of them, rather. Both of these worthy gentlemen were most anxious to have news of the invalid from her little confidential messenger.

At dinner—to which meal she descended for half an hour—she kept the peace between them, after which she disappeared for the night, when Rawdon would ride over to the depot of the 150th at Mudbury, leaving his papa to the society of Mr. Horrocks and his rum and water. She passed as weary a fortnight as ever mortal spent in Miss Crawley's sickroom, but her little nerves seemed to be of iron, as she was quite unshaken by the duty and the tedium of the sick chamber.

She never told until long afterward how painful that duty was—how peevish a patient was the jovial old lady, how angry, how sleepless, in what horrors of death, during what long nights she lay moaning and in almost delirious agonies respecting that future world which she quite ignored when she was in good health.

Sharp watched this graceless bedside with indomitable patience. Nothing escaped her, and, like a prudent steward, she found a use for everything. She told many a good story about Miss Crawley's illness in afterdays—stories which made the lady blush through her artificial carnations. During the illness she was never out of temper, always alert. She slept light, having a perfectly clear conscience, and could take that refreshment at almost any minute's warning. And so you saw very few traces of fatigue in her appearance. Her face might be a trifle paler, and the circles round her eyes a little blacker than usual; but whenever she came out from the sickroom she was always smiling, fresh, and neat, and looked as trim in her little dressing gown and cap as in her smartest evening suit.

The Captain thought so, and raved about her in uncouth convulsions. The barbed shaft of love had penetrated his dull hide. Six weeks—appropinquity—opportunity—had victimized him completely. He made a confidante of his aunt at the rectory, of all persons in the world. She rallied him about it. She had perceived his folly, she warned him; she finished by owning that little Sharp was the most clever, droll, odd, good-natured, simple, kindly creature in England. Rawdon must not trifle with her affections, though—dear Miss Crawley would never pardon him for that; for she too was quite overcome by the little governess, and loved Sharp like a daughter. Rawdon must go away—go back to his regiment and naughty London, and not play with a poor artless girl's feelings.

Many and many a time this good-natured lady, compassionating the forlorn Life Guardsman's condition, gave him an opportunity of seeing Miss Sharp at the rectory, and of walking home with her, as we have seen. Rawdon saw there was a manifest intention on Mrs. Bute's part to captivate him with Rebecca. He was not very wise, but he was a man about town and had seen several seasons. A light dawned upon his dusky soul, as he thought, through a speech of Mrs. Bute's.

"Mark my words, Rawdon," she said. "You will have Miss Sharp one day for your relation."

"What relation—my cousin, hey, Mrs. Bute? James sweet on her, hey?" inquired the waggish officer.

"More than that," Mrs. Bute said, with a flash from her black eyes.

"Not Pitt? He sha'n't have her. The sneak ain't worthy of her. He's booked to Lady Jane Sheepshanks."

"You men perceive nothing. You silly, blind creature—if anything happens to Lady Crawley, Miss Sharp will be your mother-in-law, and *that's* what will happen."

Rawdon Crawley, Esquire, gave vent to a prodigious whistle in token of astonishment at this announcement. He couldn't deny it. His father's evident liking for Miss Sharp had not escaped him. He knew the old gentleman's character well, and a more unscrupulous old—whyou—he did not conclude the sentence, but walked home curling his mustachios and convinced he had found a clew to Mrs. Bute's mystery.

"By Jove, it's too bad," thought Rawdon, "too bad, by Jove! I do believe the woman wants the poor girl to be ruined, in order that she shouldn't come into the family as Lady Crawley."

When he saw Rebecca alone, he rallied her about his father's attachment in his graceful way. She flung up her head scornfully, looked him full in the face, and said:

"Well, suppose he *is* fond of me. I know he is, and others too. You don't think I am afraid of him, Captain Crawley? You don't suppose I can't defend my own honor," said the little woman, looking as stately as a queen.

"Oh, ah, why—give you fair warning—look out, you know—that's all," said the mustachio-twiddler.

"You hint at something not honorable, then?" said she, flashing out.

"Oh—gad—really—Miss Rebecca," the heavy dragoon interposed.

"Do you suppose I have no feeling of self-respect because I am poor and friendless, and because rich people have none? Do you think because I am a governess I have not as much sense, and feeling, and good breeding as you gentlefolk in Hampshire? I'm a Montmorency. Do you suppose a Montmorency is not as good as a Crawley?"

When Miss Sharp was agitated and alluded to her maternal relatives, she spoke with ever so slight a foreign accent, which gave a great charm to her clear, ringing voice. "No," she continued, kindling as she spoke to the Captain, "I can endure poverty, but not shame—neglect, but not insult, and insult from—from *you*."

Her feelings gave way, and she burst into tears.

"Hang it, Miss Sharp—Rebecca—by Jove—upon my soul, I wouldn't for a thousand pounds—— Stop, Rebecca!"

She was gone. She drove out with Miss Crawley that day. It was before the latter's illness. At dinner she was unusually brilliant and lively, but she would take no notice of the hints or the nods or the clumsy expostulations of the humiliated, infatuated Guardsman. Skirmishes of this sort passed perpetually

during the little campaign—tedious to relate, and similar in result. The Crawley heavy cavalry was maddened by defeat and routed every day.

If the Baronet of Queen's Crawley had not had the fear of losing his sister's legacy before his eyes, he never would have permitted his dear girls to lose the educational blessings which their invaluable governess was conferring upon them. The old house at home seemed a desert without her, so useful and pleasant had Rebecca made herself there. Sir Pitt's letters were not copied and corrected, his books not made up, his household business and manifold schemes neglected, now that his little secretary was away. And it was easy to see how necessary such an amanuensis was to him by the tenor and spelling of the numerous letters which he sent to her entreating her and commanding her to return. Almost every day brought a frank from the Baronet enclosing the most urgent prayers to Becky for her return, or conveying pathetic statements to Miss Crawley regarding the neglected state of his daughters' education, of which documents Miss Crawley took very little heed.

Miss Briggs was not formally dismissed, but her place as companion was a sinecure and a derision, and her company was the fat spaniel in the drawing-room, or occasionally the discontented Firkin in the housekeeper's closet. Nor, though the old lady would by no means hear of Rebecca's departure, was the latter regularly installed in office in Park Lane. Like many wealthy people, it was Miss Crawley's habit to accept as much service as she could get from her inferiors and good-naturedly to take leave of them when she no longer found them useful. Gratitude among certain rich folks is scarcely natural or to be thought of. They take needy people's services as their due.

When Miss Crawley was convalescent and descended to the drawing-room, Becky sang to her and otherwise amused her; when she was well enough to drive out, Becky accompanied her. And among the drives which they took, whither, of all places in the world, did Miss Crawley's admirable good nature and friendship actually induce her to penetrate but to Russell Square, Bloomsbury, and the house of John Sedley, Esquire.

Ere that event, many notes had passed, as may be imagined, between the two dear friends. During the months of Rebecca's stay in Hampshire, the eternal friendship had (must it be owned?) suffered considerable diminution, and grown so decrepit and feeble with old age as to threaten demise altogether. The fact is, both girls had their own real affairs to think of: Rebecca her advance with her employers, Amelia her own absorbing topic. When the two girls met and flew into each other's arms with that impetuosity which distinguishes the behavior of young ladies toward each other, Rebecca performed her part of the embrace with the most perfect briskness and energy. Poor little Amelia blushed as she kissed her friend, and thought she had been guilty of something very like coldness toward her.

Their first interview was but a very short one. Amelia was just ready to go out for a walk. Miss Crawley was waiting in her carriage below, her people wondering at the locality in which they found themselves and gazing upon honest Sambo, the black footman of Bloomsbury, as one of the queer natives of the place. But when Amelia came down with her kind, smiling looks (Re-

becca must introduce her to her friend, Miss Crawley was longing to see her, and was too ill to leave her carriage)—when, I say, Amelia came down, the Park Lane shoulder-knot aristocracy wondered more and more that such a thing could come out of Bloomsbury, and Miss Crawley was fairly captivated by the sweet, blushing face of the young lady who came forward so timidly and so gracefully to pay her respects to the protector of her friend.

"What a complexion, my dear! What a sweet voice!" Miss Crawley said as they drove away westward after the little interview. "My dear Sharp, your young friend is charming. Send for her to Park Lane, do you hear?" Miss Crawley had a good taste. She liked natural manners—a little timidity only set them off. She liked pretty faces near her, as she liked pretty pictures and nice china. She talked of Amelia with rapture half a dozen times that day. She mentioned her to Rawdon Crawley, who came dutifully to partake of his aunt's chicken.

Of course, on this Rebecca instantly stated that Amelia was engaged to be married—to a Lieutenant Osborne, a very old flame.

"Is he a man in a line regiment?" Captain Crawley asked, remembering, after an effort, as became a Guardsman, the number of the regiment, the —th.

Rebecca thought that was the regiment. The Captain's name, she said, was Captain Dobbin.

"A lanky, gawky fellow," said Crawley, "tumbles over everybody. I know him. And Osborne's a goodish-looking fellow with large black whiskers?"

"Enormous," Miss Rebecca Sharp said, "and enormously proud of them, I assure you."

Captain Rawdon Crawley burst into a horselaugh by way of reply, and being pressed by the ladies to explain, did so when the explosion of hilarity was over. "He fancies he can play at billiards," said he. "I won two hundred of him at the Cocoa Tree. *He* play, the young flat! He'd have played for anything that day, but his friend Captain Dobbin carried him off, hang him!"

"Rawdon, Rawdon, don't be so wicked," Miss Crawley remarked, highly pleased.

"Why, ma'am, of all the young fellows I've seen out of the line, I think this fellow's the greenest. Tarquin and Deuceace get what money they like out of him. He'd go to the deuce to be seen with a lord. He pays their dinners at Greenwich, and they invite the company."

"And very pretty company too, I dare say."

"Quite right, Miss Sharp. Right, as usual, Miss Sharp. Uncommon pretty company—haw, haw!" And the Captain laughed more and more, thinking he had made a good joke.

"Rawdon, don't be naughty!" his aunt exclaimed.

"Well, his father's a City man—immensely rich, they say. Hang those City fellows, they must bleed. And I've not done with him yet, I can tell you. Haw, haw!"

"Fie, Captain Crawley, I shall warn Amelia. A gambling husband!"

"Horrid, ain't he?" the Captain said with great solemnity, and then added, a sudden thought having struck him, "Gad, I say, ma'am, we'll have him here."

"Is he a presentable sort of a person?" the aunt inquired.

"Presentable?—Oh, very well. You wouldn't see any difference," Captain Crawley answered. "Do let's have him when you begin to see a few people, and his whatdyecallem—his inamorato—eh, Miss Sharp, that's what you call it—comes. Gad, I'll write him a note and have him, and I'll try if he can play piquet as well as billiards. Where does he live, Miss Sharp?"

Miss Sharp told Crawley the Lieutenant's town address, and a few days after this conversation, Lieutenant Osborne received a letter in Captain Rawdon's schoolboy hand and enclosing a note of invitation from Miss Crawley.

Rebecca dispatched also an invitation to her darling Amelia, who you may be sure was ready enough to accept it when she heard that George was to be of the party. It was arranged that Amelia was to spend the morning with the ladies of Park Lane, where all were very kind to her. Rebecca patronized her with calm superiority. She was so much the cleverer of the two, and her friend so gentle and unassuming, that she always yielded when anybody chose to command and so took Rebecca's orders with perfect meekness and good humor. Miss Crawley's graciousness was also remarkable. She continued in raptures about little Amelia, talked about her before her face, as if she were a doll, or a servant, or a picture, and admired her with the most benevolent wonder possible. Miss Crawley's prodigious benevolence rather fatigued poor little Amelia, and I am not sure that of the three ladies in Park Lane she did not find honest Miss Briggs the most agreeable. She sympathized with Briggs as with all neglected or gentle people—she wasn't what you call a woman of spirit.

George came to dinner—a repast en garçon with Captain Crawley. The great family coach of the Osbornes transported him to Park Lane from Russell Square, where the young ladies, who were not themselves invited and professed the greatest indifference at that slight, nevertheless looked at Sir Pitt Crawley's name in the baronetage, and learned everything which that work had to teach about the Crawley family and their pedigree, and the Binkies, their relatives, etc., etc. Rawdon Crawley received George Osborne with great frankness and graciousness, praised his play at billiards, asked him when he would have his revenge, was interested about Osborne's regiment, and would have proposed piquet to him that very evening but Miss Crawley absolutely forbade any gambling in her house, so that the young lieutenant's purse was not lightened by his gallant patron, for that day at least. However, they made an engagement for the next somewhere, to look at a horse that Crawley had to sell and to try him in the park, and to dine together and to pass the evening with some jolly fellows. "That is, if you're not on duty to that pretty Miss Sedley," Crawley said, with a knowing wink. "Monstrous nice girl, 'pon my honor, though, Osborne," he was good enough to add. "Lots of tin, I suppose, eh?"

Osborne wasn't on duty, he would join Crawley with pleasure. And the latter, when they met the next day, praised his new friend's horsemanship—as he might with perfect honesty—and introduced him to three or four young men of the first fashion, whose acquaintance immensely elated the simple young officer.

"How's little Miss Sharp, by-the-by?" Osborne inquired of his friend over their wine, with a dandified air. "Good-natured little girl that. Does she suit you well at Queen's Crawley? Miss Sedley liked her a good deal last year."

Captain Crawley looked savagely at the Lieutenant out of his little blue eyes, and watched him when he went up to resume his acquaintance with the fair governess. Her conduct must have relieved Crawley, if there was any jealousy in the bosom of that Life Guardsman. When the young men went upstairs, and after Osborne's introduction to Miss Crawley, he walked up to Rebecca with a patronizing, easy swagger. He was going to be kind to her and protect her. He would even shake hands with her, as a friend of Amelia's, and saying, "Ah, Miss Sharp, howdy-doo?" held out his left hand toward her, expecting that she would be quite confounded at the honor.

Miss Sharp put out her right forefinger, and gave him a little nod, so cool and killing that Rawdon Crawley, watching the operations from the other room, could hardly restrain his laughter as he saw the Lieutenant's entire discomfiture, the start he gave, the pause, and the perfect clumsiness with which he at length condescended to take the finger which was offered for his embrace.

"She'd beat the devil, by Jove!" the Captain said, in a rapture, and the Lieutenant, by way of beginning the conversation agreeably, asked Rebecca how she liked her new place.

"My place?" said Miss Sharp coolly. "How kind of you to remind me of it! It's a tolerably good place—the wages are pretty good—not so good as Miss Wirt's, I believe, with your sisters in Russell Square. How are those young ladies?—Not that I ought to ask."

"Why not?" Mr. Osborne said, amazed.

"Why, they never condescended to speak to me, or to ask me into their house, while I was staying with Amelia; but we poor governesses, you know, are used to slights of this sort."

"My dear Miss Sharp!" Osborne ejaculated.

"At least in some families," Rebecca continued. "You can't think what a difference there is, though. We are not so wealthy in Hampshire as you lucky folks of the City. But then I am in a gentleman's family—good old English stock. I suppose you know Sir Pitt's father refused a peerage. And you see how I am treated. I am pretty comfortable. Indeed, it is rather a good place. But how *very* good of you to inquire!"

Osborne was quite savage. The little governess patronized him and *persiffléd* him until this young British Lion felt quite uneasy, nor could he muster sufficient presence of mind to find a pretext for backing out of this must delectable conversation.

"I thought you liked the City families pretty well," he said, haughtily.

"Last year, you mean, when I was fresh from that horrid, vulgar school? Of course I did. Doesn't every girl like to come home for the holidays? And how was I to know any better? But oh, Mr. Osborne, what a difference eighteen months' experience makes!—eighteen months spent, pardon me for saying so, with gentlemen. As for dear Amelia, she, I grant you, is a pearl, and would be charming anywhere. There now, I see you are beginning to be in a good

humor—but oh these queer, odd City people! And Mr. Jos—how is that wonderful Mr. Joseph?"

"It seems to me you didn't dislike that wonderful Mr. Joseph last year," Osborne said kindly.

"How severe of you! Well, entre nous, I didn't break my heart about him, yet if he had asked me to do what you mean by your looks (and very expressive and kind they are, too), I wouldn't have said no."

Mr. Osborne gave a look as much as to say "Indeed, how very obliging!"

"What an honor to have had you for a brother-in-law, you are thinking? To be sister-in-law to George Osborne, Esquire, son of John Osborne, Esquire, son of—what was your grandpapa, Mr. Osborne? Well, don't be angry. You can't help your pedigree, and I quite agree with you that I would have married Mr. Joe Sedley, for could a poor, penniless girl do better? Now you know the whole secret. *I'm* frank and open. Considering all things, it was very kind of you to allude to the circumstance—very kind and polite. Amelia dear, Mr. Osborne and I were talking about your poor brother Joseph. How is he?"

Thus was George utterly routed. Not that Rebecca was in the right, but she had managed most successfully to put him in the wrong. And he now shamefully fled, feeling if he stayed another minute that he would have been made to look foolish in the presence of Amelia.

Though Rebecca had had the better of him, George was above the meanness of talebearing or revenge upon a lady—only he could not help cleverly confiding to Captain Crawley next day some notions of his regarding Miss Rebecca—that she was a sharp one, a dangerous one, a desperate flirt, etc., in all of which opinions Crawley agreed laughingly, and with every one of which Miss Rebecca was made acquainted before twenty-four hours were over. They added to her original regard for Mr. Osborne. Her woman's instincts had told her that it was George who had interrupted the success of her first love passage, and she esteemed him accordingly.

"I only just warn you," he said to Rawdon Crawley, with a knowing look—he had bought the horse, and lost some score of guineas after dinner—"I just warn you—I know women, and counsel you to be on the lookout."

"Thank you, my boy," said Crawley, with a look of peculiar gratitude. "You're wide-awake, I see." And George went off thinking Crawley was quite right.

He told Amelia of what he had done, and how he had counseled Rawdon Crawley—a devilish good, straightforward fellow—to be on his guard against that little sly, scheming Rebecca.

"Against *whom?*" Amelia cried.

"Your friend the governess. Don't look so astonished."

"Oh, George, what *have* you done?" Amelia said. For her woman's eyes, which love had made sharp-sighted, had in one instant discovered a secret which was invisible to Miss Crawley, to poor virgin Briggs, and above all to the stupid peepers of that young whiskered prig, Lieutenant Osborne.

For as Rebecca was shawling her in an upper apartment where these two friends had an opportunity for a little of that secret talking and conspiring

which forms the delight of female life, Amelia, coming up to Rebecca and taking her two little hands in hers, said, "Rebecca, I see it all." Rebecca kissed her.

And regarding this delightful secret, not one syllable more was said by either of the young women. But it was destined to come out before long.

Some short period after the above events, and Miss Rebecca Sharp still remaining at her patroness's house in Park Lane, one more hatchment might have been seen in Great Gaunt Street, figuring among the many which usually ornament that dismal quarter. It was over Sir Pitt Crawley's house, but it did not indicate the worthy Baronet's demise. It was a feminine hatchment, and indeed a few years back had served as a funeral compliment to Sir Pitt's old mother, the late Dowager Lady Crawley. Its period of service over, the hatchment had come down from the front of the house and lived in retirement somewhere in the back premises of Sir Pitt's mansion. It reappeared now for poor Rose Dawson. Sir Pitt was a widower again. The arms quartered on the shield along with his own were not, to be sure, poor Rose's. She had no arms. But the cherubs painted on the scutcheon answered as well for her as for Sir Pitt's mother, and *Resurgam* was written under the coat, flanked by the Crawley dove and serpent.

Mr. Crawley had tended that otherwise friendless bedside. She went out of the world strengthened by such words and comfort as he could give her. For many years his was the only kindness she ever knew, the only friendship that solaced in any way that feeble, lonely soul. Her heart was dead long before her body. She had sold it to become Sir Pitt Crawley's wife. Mothers and daughters are making the same bargain every day in Vanity Fair.

When the demise took place, her husband was in London attending to some of his innumerable schemes and busy with his endless lawyers. He had found time, nevertheless, to call often in Park Lane, and to dispatch many notes to Rebecca entreating her, enjoining her, commanding her to return to her young pupils in the country, who were now utterly without companionship during their mother's illness. But Miss Crawley would not hear of her departure; for though there was no lady of fashion in London who would desert her friends more complacently as soon as she was tired of their society, and though few tired of them sooner, yet as long as her *engoûment* lasted her attachment was prodigious, and she still clung with the greatest energy to Rebecca.

The news of Lady Crawley's death provoked no more grief or comment than might have been expected in Miss Crawley's family circle. "I suppose I must put off my party for the third," Miss Crawley said, and added, after a pause, "I hope my brother will have the decency not to marry again." "What a confounded rage Pitt will be in if he does," Rawdon remarked, with his usual regard for his elder brother. Rebecca said nothing. She seemed by far the gravest and most impressed of the family. She left the room before Rawdon went away that day, but they met by chance below as he was going away after taking leave, and had a parley together.

On the morrow, as Rebecca was gazing from the window she startled Miss Crawley, who was placidly occupied with a French novel, by crying out in

an alarmed tone, "Here's Sir Pitt, ma'am!" and the Baronet's knock followed this announcement.

"My dear, I can't see him. I won't see him. Tell Bowls not at home, or go downstairs and say I'm too ill to receive anyone. My nerves really won't bear my brother at this moment!" cried out Miss Crawley, and resumed the novel.

"She's too ill to see you, sir," Rebecca said, tripping down to Sir Pitt, who was preparing to ascend.

"So much the better," Sir Pitt answered. "I want to see *you*, Miss Becky. Come along a me into the parlor." And they entered that apartment together.

"I want you back at Queen's Crawley, miss," the Baronet said, fixing his eyes upon her and taking off his black gloves and his hat with its great crape hatband. His eyes had such a strange look and fixed upon her so steadfastly that Rebecca Sharp began almost to tremble.

"I hope to come soon," she said in a low voice, "as soon as Miss Crawley is better—and return to—to the dear children."

"You've said so these three months, Becky," replied Sir Pitt, "and still you go hanging on to my sister, who'll fling you off like an old shoe when she's wore you out. I tell you I *want* you. I'm going back to the vuneral. Will you come back? Yes or no?"

"I daren't—I don't think—it would be right—to be alone—with you, sir," Becky said, seemingly in great agitation.

"I say agin, I want you," Sir Pitt said, thumping the table. "I can't git on without you. I didn't see what it was till you went away. The house all goes wrong. It's not the same place. All my accounts has got muddled agin. You *must* come back. Do come back. Dear Becky, do come."

"Come—as what, sir?" Rebecca gasped out.

"Come as Lady Crawley, if you like," the Baronet said, grasping his crape hat. "There! Will that zatisfy you? Come back and be my wife. You're vit vor't. Birth be hanged. You're as good a lady as ever I see. You've got more brains in your little vinger than any baronet's wife in the county. Will you come? Yes or no?"

"Oh, Sir Pitt!" Rebecca said, very much moved.

"Say yes, Becky," Sir Pitt continued. "I'm an old man, but a good'n. I'm good for twenty years. I'll make you happy, zee if I don't. You shall do what you like, spend what you like, and 'av it all your own way. I'll make you a zettlement. I'll do everything reglar. Look year!" And the old man fell down on his knees and leered at her like a satyr.

Rebecca started back, a picture of consternation. In the course of this history we have never seen her lose her presence of mind, but she did now, and wept some of the most genuine tears that ever fell from her eyes.

"Oh, Sir Pitt!" she said. "Oh, sir—I—I'm *married already*."

CHAPTER XIV

"Married! You're joking," the Baronet cried, after the first explosion of rage and wonder. "You're making vun of me, Becky. Who'd ever go to marry you without a shilling to your vortune?"

"Married! Married!" Rebecca said, in an agony of tears, her voice choking with emotion, her handkerchief up to her ready eyes, fainting against the mantelpiece—a figure of woe fit to melt the most odburate heart. "Oh, Sir Pitt, dear Sir Pitt, do not think me ungrateful for all your goodness to me. It is only your generosity that has extorted my secret."

"Generosity be hanged!" Sir Pitt roared out. "Who is it tu, then, you're married? Where was it?"

"Let me come back with you to the country, sir! Let me watch over you as faithfully as ever! Don't, don't separate me from dear Queen's Crawley!"

"The feller has left you, has he?" the Baronet said, beginning, as he fancied, to comprehend. "Well, Becky, come back if you like. You can't eat your cake and have it. Anyways, I made you a vair offer. Coom back as governess—you shall have it all your own way." She held out one hand. She cried fit to break her heart, her ringlets fell over her face and over the marble mantelpiece where she laid it.

"So the rascal ran off, eh?" Sir Pitt said, with a hideous attempt at consolation. "Never mind, Becky, *I'll* take care of 'ee."

"Oh, sir! It would be the pride of my life to go back to Queen's Crawley, and take care of the children and of you as formerly, when you said you were pleased with the services of your little Rebecca. When I think of what you have just offered me, my heart fills with gratitude—indeed it does. I can't be your wife, sir. Let me—let me be your daughter!"

Saying which, Rebecca went down on *her* knees in a most tragical way, and, taking Sir Pitt's horny black hand between her own two (which were very pretty and white, and as soft as satin), looked up in his face with an expression of exquisite pathos and confidence when—when the door opened, and Miss Crawley sailed in.

Mrs. Firkin and Miss Briggs, who happened by chance to be at the parlor door soon after the Baronet and Rebecca entered the apartment, had also seen accidentally, through the keyhole, the old gentleman prostrate before the governess, and had heard the generous proposal which he made to her. It was scarcely out of his mouth when Mrs. Firkin and Miss Briggs had streamed up the stairs, had rushed into the drawing-room where Miss Crawley was reading the French novel, and had given that old lady the astounding intelligence that Sir Pitt was on his knees proposing to Miss Sharp. And if you calculate the time for the above dialogue to take place—the time for Briggs and Firkin to fly to the drawing-room—the time for Miss Crawley to be astonished, and to drop her volume of *Pigault le Brun*—and the time for her to come downstairs—

you will see how exactly accurate this history is, and how Miss Crawley *must* have appeared at the very instant when Rebecca had assumed the attitude of humility.

"It is the lady on the ground, and not the gentleman," Miss Crawley said, with a look and voice of great scorn. "They told me that *you* were on your knees, Sir Pitt. Do kneel once more and let me see this pretty couple."

"I have thanked Sir Pitt Crawley, ma'am," Rebecca said, rising, "and have told him that—that I never can become Lady Crawley."

"Refused him!" Miss Crawley said, more bewildered than ever. Briggs and Firkin at the door opened the eyes of astonishment and the lips of wonder.

"Yes—refused," Rebecca continued, with a sad, tearful voice.

"And am I to credit my ears that you absolutely proposed to her, Sir Pitt?" the old lady asked.

"Ees," said the Baronet, "I did."

"And she refused you, as she says?"

"Ees," Sir Pitt said, his features on a broad grin.

"It does not seem to break your heart, at any rate," Miss Crawley remarked.

"Nawt a bit," answered Sir Pitt, with a coolness and good humor which set Miss Crawley almost mad with bewilderment. That an old gentleman of station should fall on his knees to a penniless governess and burst out laughing because she refused to marry him—that a penniless governess should refuse a baronet with four thousand a year—these were mysteries which Miss Crawley could never comprehend.

"I'm glad you think it good sport, Brother," she continued, groping wildly through this amazement.

"Vamous," said Sir Pitt. "Who'd ha' thought it! What a sly little devil! What a little fox it waws!" he muttered to himself, chuckling with pleasure.

"Who'd have thought what?" cried Miss Crawley, stamping with her foot. "Pray, Miss Sharp, are you waiting for the Prince Regent's divorce, that you don't think our family good enough for you?"

"My attitude," Rebecca said, "when you came in, ma'am, did not look as if I despised such an honor as this good—this noble man has deigned to offer me. Do you think I have no heart? Have you all loved me and been so kind to the poor orphan—deserted—girl, and am *I* to feel nothing? O my friends! O my benefactors! May not my love, my life, my duty, try to repay the confidence you have shown me? Do you grudge me even gratitude, Miss Crawley? It is too much—my heart is too full." And she sank down in a chair so pathetically that most of the audience present were perfectly melted with her sadness.

"Whether you marry me or not, you're a good little girl, Becky, and I'm your vriend, mind," said Sir Pitt, and putting on his crape-bound hat, he walked away—greatly to Rebecca's relief, for it was evident that her secret was unrevealed to Miss Crawley, and she had the advantage of a brief reprieve.

Putting her handkerchief to her eyes, and nodding away honest Briggs, who would have followed her upstairs, she went up to her apartment while Briggs and Miss Crawley, in a high state of excitement, remained to discuss the strange event, and Firkin, not less moved, dived down into the kitchen regions

and talked of it with all the male and female company there. And so impressed was Mrs. Firkin with the news that she thought proper to write off by that very night's post, "with her humble duty to Mrs. Bute Crawley and the family at the rectory, and Sir Pitt had been and proposed for to marry Miss Sharp, wherein she had refused him, to the wonder of all."

The two ladies in the dining-room wondered to their hearts' content at Sir Pitt's offer and Rebecca's refusal, Briggs very acutely suggesting that there must have been some obstacle in the shape of a previous attachment; otherwise no young woman in her senses would ever have refused so advantageous a proposal.

"You would have accepted it yourself, wouldn't you, Briggs?" Miss Crawley said kindly.

"Would it not be a privilege to be Miss Crawley's sister?" Briggs replied, with meek evasion.

"Well, Becky would have made a good Lady Crawley, after all," Miss Crawley remarked (who was mollified by the girl's refusal, and very liberal and generous, now there was no call for her sacrifices). "She has brains in plenty (much more wit in her little finger than you have, my poor dear Briggs, in all your head). Her manners are excellent, now I have formed her. She is a Montmorency, Briggs, and blood *is* something, though I despise it for my part; and she would have held her own among those pompous, stupid Hampshire people much better than that unfortunate ironmonger's daughter."

Briggs coincided as usual, and the "previous attachment" was then discussed in conjectures. "You poor friendless creatures are always having some foolish *tendre*," Miss Crawley said. "You yourself, you know, were in love with a writing master (don't cry, Briggs—you're always crying, and it won't bring him to life again), and I suppose this unfortunate Becky has been silly and sentimental, too—some apothecary, or house steward, or painter, or young curate, or something of that sort."

"Poor thing, poor thing!" says Briggs (who was thinking of twenty-four years back, and that hectic young writing master whose lock of yellow hair and whose letters, beautiful in their illegibility, she cherished in her old desk upstairs). "Poor thing, poor thing!" says Briggs. Once more she was a fresh-cheeked lass of eighteen, she was at evening church, and the hectic writing master and she were quavering out of the same psalmbook.

"After such conduct on Rebecca's part," Miss Crawley said enthusiastically, "our family should do something. Find out who is the *objet*, Briggs. I'll set him up in a shop; or order my portrait of him, you know. Or speak to my cousin the Bishop—and I'll *doter* Becky, and we'll have a wedding, Briggs, and you shall make the breakfast and be a bridesmaid."

Briggs declared it would be delightful, and vowed that her dear Miss Crawley was always kind and generous, and went up to Rebecca's bedroom to console her and prattle about the offer, and the refusal, and the cause thereof; and to hint at the generous intentions of Miss Crawley; and to find out who was the gentleman that had the mastery of Miss Sharp's heart.

Rebecca was very kind, very affectionate and affected—responded to Briggs's

offer of tenderness with grateful fervor—owned there was a secret attachment—a delicious mystery—what a pity Miss Briggs had not remained half a minute longer at the keyhole! Rebecca might, perhaps, have told more. But five minutes after Miss Briggs's arrival in Rebecca's apartment, Miss Crawley actually made her appearance there—an unheard-of honor. Her impatience had overcome her, she could not wait for the tardy operations of her ambassadress, so she came in person, and ordered Briggs out of the room. And expressing her approval of Rebecca's conduct, she asked particulars of the interview and the previous transactions which had brought about the astonishing offer of Sir Pitt.

Rebecca said she had long had some notion of the partiality with which Sir Pitt honored her (for he was in the habit of making his feelings known in a very frank and unreserved manner), but, not to mention private reasons with which she would not for the present trouble Miss Crawley, Sir Pitt's age, station, and habits were such as to render a marriage quite impossible. And could a woman with any feeling of self-respect and any decency listen to proposals at such a moment, when the funeral of the lover's deceased wife had not actually taken place?

"Nonsense, my dear, you would never have refused him had there not been someone else in the case," Miss Crawley said, coming to her point at once. "Tell me the private reasons—what are the private reasons? There *is* someone. Who is it that has touched your heart?"

Rebecca cast down her eyes, and owned there was. "You have guessed right, dear lady," she said, with a sweet, simple, faltering voice. "You wonder at one so poor and friendless having an attachment, don't you? I have never heard that poverty was any safeguard against it. I wish it were."

"My poor, dear child," cried Miss Crawley, who was always quite ready to be sentimental, "is our passion unrequited, then? Are we pining in secret? Tell me all, and let me console you."

"I wish you could, dear madam," Rebecca said in the same tearful tone. "Indeed, indeed, I need it." And she laid her head upon Miss Crawley's shoulder and wept there so naturally that the old lady, surprised into sympathy, embraced her with an almost maternal kindness, uttered many soothing protests of regard and affection for her, vowed that she loved her as a daughter, and would do everything in her power to serve her. "And now who is it, my dear? Is it that pretty Miss Sedley's brother? You said something about an affair with him. I'll ask him here, my dear. And you shall have him—indeed you shall."

"Don't ask me now," Rebecca said. "You shall know all soon. Indeed you shall. Dear, kind Miss Crawley—dear friend—may I say so?"

"That you may, my child," the old lady replied, kissing her.

"I can't tell you now," sobbed out Rebecca. "I am very miserable. But oh, love me always—promise you will love me always." And in the midst of mutual tears—for the emotions of the younger woman had awakened the sympathies of the elder—this promise was solemnly given by Miss Crawley, who left her little protégée, blessing and admiring her as a dear, artless, tenderhearted, affectionate, incomprehensible creature.

And now she was left alone to think over the sudden and wonderful events

of the day, and of what had been and what might have been. What think you were the private feelings of Miss, no (begging her pardon), of Mrs. Rebecca? Well, then, in the first place, Rebecca gave way to some very sincere and touching regrets that a piece of marvelous good fortune should have been so near her and she actually obliged to decline it. In this natural emotion every properly regulated mind will certainly share. What good mother is there that would not commiserate a penniless spinster who might have been my lady and have shared four thousand a year? What well-bred young person is there in all Vanity Fair who will not feel for a hard-working, ingenuous, meritorious girl who gets such an honorable, advantageous, provoking offer just at the very moment when it is out of her power to accept it? I am sure our friend Becky's disappointment deserves and will command every sympathy.

But Rebecca was a young lady of too much resolution and energy of character to permit herself much useless and unseemly sorrow for the irrevocable past; so, having devoted only the proper portion of regret to it, she wisely turned her whole attention toward the future, which was now vastly more important to her. And she surveyed her position, and its hopes, doubts, and chances.

In the first place, she was *married*. That was a great fact. Sir Pitt knew it. She was not so much surprised into the avowal as induced to make it by a sudden calculation. It must have come some day, and why not now as at a later period? He who would have married her himself must at least be silent with regard to her marriage. How Miss Crawley would bear the news was the great question. Misgivings Rebecca had, but she remembered all Miss Crawley had said—the old lady's avowed contempt for birth, her daring liberal opinions, her general romantic propensities, her almost doting attachment to her nephew, and her repeatedly-expressed fondness for Rebecca herself. "She is so fond of him," Rebecca thought, "that she will forgive him anything. She is so used to me that I don't think she could be comfortable without me. When the *éclaircissement* comes there will be a scene, and hysterics, and a great quarrel, and then a great reconciliation." At all events, what use was there in delaying? The die was thrown, and now or tomorrow the issue must be the same. And so, resolved that Miss Crawley should have the news, the young person debated in her mind as to the best means of conveying it to her, and whether she should face the storm that must come or fly and avoid it until its first fury was blown over. In this state of meditation she wrote the following letter:

Dearest friend:

The great crisis which we have debated about so often is *come*. Half of my secret is known, and I have thought and thought, until I am quite sure that now is the time to reveal *the whole of the mystery*. Sir Pitt came to me this morning, and made—what do you think?—*a declaration in form*. Think of that! Poor little me. I might have been Lady Crawley. How pleased Mrs. Bute would have been, and *ma tante*, if I had taken prece-

dence of her! I might have been somebody's mamma, instead of—oh, I tremble, I tremble when I think how soon we must tell all!

Sir Pitt knows I am married, and not knowing to whom, is not very much displeased as yet. *Ma tante* is *actually angry* that I should have refused him. But she is all kindness and graciousness. She condescends to say I would have made him a good wife, and vows that she will be a mother to your little Rebecca. She will be shaken when she first hears the news. But need we fear anything beyond a momentary anger? I think not, *I am sure* not. She dotes upon you so (you naughty, good-for-nothing man) that she would pardon you *anything*, and indeed I believe the next place in her heart is mine, and that she would be miserable without me. Dearest! something *tells me* we shall conquer. You shall leave that odious regiment, quit gaming, racing, and *be a good boy*, and we shall all live in Park Lane, and *ma tante* shall leave us all her money.

I shall try and walk tomorrow at three in the usual place. If Miss B accompanies me, you must come to dinner, and bring an answer, and put it in the third volume of Porteus's *Sermons*. But, at all events, come to your own R.

To Miss Eliza Styles
At Mr. Barnet's, Saddler, Knightsbridge

And I trust there is no reader of this little story who has not discernment enough to perceive that the Miss Eliza Styles (an old schoolfellow, Rebecca said, with whom she had resumed an active correspondence of late, and who used to fetch these letters from the saddler's), wore brass spurs and large curling mustachios, and was indeed no other than Captain Rawdon Crawley.

CHAPTER XV

How THEY WERE MARRIED is not of the slightest consequence to anybody. What is to hinder a captain who is a major and a young lady who is of age from purchasing a license and uniting themselves at any church in this town? Who needs to be told that if a woman has a will she will assuredly find a way? My belief is that one day when Miss Sharp had gone to pass the forenoon with her dear friend Miss Amelia Sedley in Russell Square, a lady very like her might have been seen entering a church in the City, in company with a gentleman with dyed mustachios who, after a quarter of an hour's interval, escorted her back to the hackney coach in waiting, and that this was a quiet bridal party.

And who on earth, after the daily experience we have, can question the probability of a gentleman marrying anybody? How many of the wise and learned have married their cooks? Did not Lord Eldon himself, the most prudent of men, make a runaway match? Were not Achilles and Ajax both in love with their servantmaids? And are we to expect a heavy dragoon with

strong desires and small brains, who had never controlled a passion in his life, to become prudent all of a sudden and to refuse to pay any price for an indulgence to which he had a mind? If people only made prudent marriages, what a stop to population there would be!

It seems to me, for my part, that Mr. Rawdon's marriage was one of the honestest actions which we shall have to record in any portion of that gentleman's biography which has to do with the present history. No one will say it is unmanly to be captivated by a woman or, being captivated, to marry her. And the admiration, the delight, the passion, the wonder, the unbounded confidence, and frantic adoration with which, by degrees, this great warrior got to regard the little Rebecca were feelings which the ladies at least will pronounce not altogether discreditable to him. When she sang, every note thrilled in his dull soul and tingled through his huge frame. When she spoke, he brought all the force of his brains to listen and wonder. If she was jocular, he used to revolve her jokes in his mind, and explode over them half an hour afterward in the street, to the surprise of the groom in the tilbury by his side, or the comrade riding with him in Rotten Row. Her words were oracles to him, her smallest actions marked by an infallible grace and wisdom. "How she sings—how she paints!" thought he. "How she rode that kicking mare at Queen's Crawley!" And he would say to her in confidential moments: "By Jove, Beck, you're fit to be Commander in Chief, or Archbishop of Canterbury, by Jove!"

When, then, Becky told him that the great crisis was near and the time for action had arrived, Rawdon expressed himself as ready to act under her orders as he would be to charge with his troop at the command of his colonel. There was no need for him to put his letter into the third volume of Porteus. Rebecca easily found a means to get rid of Briggs, her companion, and met her faithful friend in "the usual place" on the next day. She had thought over matters at night, and communicated to Rawdon the result of her determinations. He agreed, of course, to everything, was quite sure that it was all right, that what she proposed was best, that Miss Crawley would infallibly relent, or "come round," as he said, after a time. Had Rebecca's resolutions been entirely different, he would have followed them as implicitly. "You have head enough for both of us, Beck," said he. "You're sure to get us out of the scrape. I never saw your equal, and I've met with some clippers in my time, too." And with this simple confession of faith, the love-stricken dragoon left her to execute his part of the project which she had formed for the pair.

It consisted simply in the hiring of quiet lodgings at Brompton, or in the neighborhood of the barracks, for Captain and Mrs. Crawley. For Rebecca had determined, and very prudently, we think, to fly. Rawdon was only too happy at her resolve; he had been entreating her to take this measure any time for weeks past. He pranced off to engage the lodgings with all the impetuosity of love. He agreed to pay two guineas a week so readily that the landlady regretted she had asked him so little. He ordered in a piano and half a nursery house full of flowers, and a heap of good things. As for shawls, kid gloves, silk stockings, gold French watches, bracelets, and perfumery, he sent them in with the profusion of blind love and unbounded credit. And having relieved his mind

by this outpouring of generosity, he went and dined nervously at the club, waiting until the great moment of his life should come.

The occurrences of the previous day—the admirable conduct of Rebecca in refusing an offer so advantageous to her, the secret unhappiness preying upon her, the sweetness and silence with which she bore her affliction—made Miss Crawley much more tender than usual. An event of this nature, a marriage, or a refusal, or a proposal, thrills through a whole household of women and sets all their hysterical sympathies at work. Miss Crawley and Briggs, in a word, after the affair of Sir Pitt indulged in the utmost luxury of sentiment, and Rebecca became an object of the most tender interest to them. In her absence Miss Crawley solaced herself with the most sentimental of the novels in her library. Little Sharp, with her secret griefs, was the heroine of the day.

That night Rebecca sang more sweetly and talked more pleasantly than she had ever been heard to do in Park Lane. She twined herself round the heart of Miss Crawley. She spoke lightly and laughingly of Sir Pitt's proposal, ridiculed it as the foolish fancy of an old man; and her eyes filled with tears, and Briggs's heart with unutterable pangs of defeat, as she said she desired no other lot than to remain forever with her dear benefactress. "My dear little creature," the old lady said, "I don't intend to let you stir for years, that you may depend upon. As for going back to that odious brother of mine after what has passed, it is out of the question. Here you stay with me and Briggs. Briggs wants to go to see her relations very often. Briggs, you may go when you like. But as for you, my dear, you must stay and take care of the old woman."

If Rawdon Crawley had been then and there present, instead of being at the club nervously drinking claret, the pair might have gone down on their knees before the old spinster, avowed all, and been forgiven in a twinkling. But that good chance was denied to the young couple.

On the second day after Sir Pitt Crawley's offer to Miss Sharp, the sun rose as usual, and at the usual hour Betty Martin, the upstairs maid, knocked at the door of the governess's bedchamber: No answer was returned, and she knocked again. Silence was still uninterrupted, and Betty, with the hot water, opened the door and entered the chamber.

The little white dimity bed was as smooth and trim as on the day previous, when Betty's own hands had helped to make it. Two little trunks were corded in one end of the room, and on the table before the window, on the pincushion —the great fat pincushion lined with pink inside, and twilled like a lady's night-cap—lay a letter. It had been reposing there probably all night.

Betty advanced toward it on tiptoe, as if she were afraid to awake it—looked at it, and round the room, with an air of great wonder and satisfaction, took up the letter, and grinned intensely as she turned it round and over and finally carried it into Miss Briggs's room below.

"La, Miss Briggs," the girl exclaimed. "Oh, miss, something must have happened—there's nobody in Miss Sharp's room, the bed ain't been slep' in, and she've run away, and left this letter for you, miss."

"*What!*" cries Briggs, dropping her comb, the thin wisp of faded hair falling over her shoulders. "An elopement! Miss Sharp a fugitive! What, what is

this?" And she eagerly broke the neat seal and, as they say, "devoured the contents" of the letter addressed to her.

Dear Miss Briggs, The kindest heart in the world, as yours is, will pity and sympathize with me and excuse me. With tears, and prayers, and blessings, I leave the home where the poor orphan has ever met with kindness and affection. Claims even superior to those of my benefactress call me hence. I go to my duty—to my *husband*. Yes, I am married. My husband *commands* me to seek the *humble home* which we call ours. Dearest Miss Briggs, break the news as your delicate sympathy will know how to do it, to my dear, my beloved friend and benefactress. Tell her ere I went I shed tears on her dear pillow—that pillow that I have so often soothed in sickness—that I long *again* to watch—oh, with what joy shall I return to dear Park Lane! How I tremble for the answer which is to *seal my fate!* When Sir Pitt deigned to offer me his hand, an honor of which my beloved Miss Crawley said I was *deserving* (my blessings go with her for judging the poor orphan worthy to be her *sister!*) I told Sir Pitt that I was *already a wife*. Even he forgave me. But my courage failed me when I should have told him all—that I could not be his wife, for I *was his daughter!* I am wedded to the best and most generous of men—Miss Crawley's Rawdon is *my* Rawdon. At his *command* I open my lips, and follow him to our humble home, as I would *through the world*. Oh, my excellent and kind friend, intercede with my Rawdon's beloved aunt for him and the poor girl to whom all *his noble race* have shown such *unparalleled affection*. Ask Miss Crawley to receive *her children*. I can say no more, but blessings, blessings on all in the dear house I leave, prays

Your affectionate and *grateful*

Midnight REBECCA CRAWLEY

Just as Briggs had finished reading this affecting and interesting document, which reinstated her in her position as first confidante of Miss Crawley, Mrs. Firkin entered the room. "Here's Mrs. Bute Crawley just arrived by the mail from Hampshire and wants some tea. Will you come down and make breakfast, miss?"

And to the surprise of Firkin, clasping her dressing gown around her, the wisp of hair floating disheveled behind her, the little curl papers still sticking in bunches round her forehead, Briggs sailed down to Mrs. Bute with the letter in her hand containing the wonderful news.

"Oh, Mrs. Firkin," gasped Betty, "sech a business. Miss Sharp have agone and run away with the Capting, and they're off to Gretny Green!" We would devote a chapter to describe the emotions of Mrs. Firkin did not the passions of her mistresses occupy our genteeler muse.

When Mrs. Bute Crawley, numbed with midnight traveling and warming herself at the newly crackling parlor fire, heard from Miss Briggs the intelligence of the clandestine marriage, she declared it was quite providential that she should have arrived at such a time to assist poor dear Miss Crawley in sup-

porting the shock—that Rebecca was an artful little hussy, of whom she had always had her suspicions; and that as for Rawdon Crawley, she never could account for his aunt's infatuation regarding him, and had long considered him a profligate, lost, and abandoned being. And this awful conduct, Mrs. Bute said, will have at least *this* good effect—it will open poor dear Miss Crawley's eyes to the real character of this wicked man. Then Mrs. Bute had a comfortable hot toast and tea, and as there was a vacant room in the house now, there was no need for her to remain at the Gloster Coffeehouse, where the Portsmouth mail had set her down and whence she ordered Mr. Bowls's aide-de-camp the footman to bring away her trunks.

Miss Crawley, be it known, did not leave her room until near noon—taking chocolate in bed in the morning while Becky Sharp read the *Morning Post* to her, or otherwise amusing herself or dawdling. The conspirators below agreed that they would spare the dear lady's feelings until she appeared in her drawing-room. Meanwhile it was announced to her that Mrs. Bute Crawley had come up from Hampshire by the mail, was staying at the Gloster, sent her love to Miss Crawley, and asked for breakfast with Miss Briggs. The arrival of Mrs. Bute, which would not have caused any extreme delight at another period, was hailed with pleasure now, Miss Crawley being pleased at the notion of a gossip with her sister-in-law regarding the late Lady Crawley, the funeral arrangements pending, and Sir Pitt's abrupt proposals to Rebecca.

It was not until the old lady was fairly ensconced in her usual armchair in the drawing-room and the preliminary embraces and inquiries had taken place between the ladies that the conspirators thought it advisable to submit her to the operation. Who has not admired the artifices and delicate approaches with which women "prepare" their friends for bad news? Miss Crawley's two friends made such an apparatus of mystery before they broke the intelligence to her that they worked her up to the necessary degree of doubt and alarm.

"And she refused Sir Pitt, my dear, dear Miss Crawley, prepare yourself for it," Mrs. Bute said, "because—because she couldn't help herself."

"Of course there was a reason," Miss Crawley answered. "She liked somebody else. I told Briggs so yesterday."

"*Likes* somebody else!" Briggs gasped. "Oh, my dear friends, she is married already."

"Married already," Mrs. Bute chimed in, and both sat with clasped hands looking from each other at their victim.

"Send her to me the instant she comes in. The little sly wretch—how dared she not tell me?" cried out Miss Crawley.

"She won't come in soon. Prepare yourself, dear friend—she's gone out for a long time—she's—she's gone altogether."

"Gracious goodness, and who's to make my chocolate? Send for her and have her back. I desire that she come back," the old lady said.

"She decamped last night, ma'am," cried Mrs. Bute.

"She left a letter for me," Briggs exclaimed. "She's married to——"

"Prepare her, for heaven's sake. Don't torture her, my dear Miss Briggs."

"She's married to whom?" cried the spinster in a nervous fury.

"To—to a relation of—"

"She refused Sir Pitt," cried the victim. "Speak at once. Don't drive me mad."

"Oh, ma'am—prepare her, Miss Briggs—she's married to Rawdon Crawley."

"Rawdon married—Rebecca—governess—nobod— Get out of my house, you fool, you idiot—you stupid old Briggs—how dare you? You're in the plot—you made him marry, thinking that I'd leave my money from him—you did, Martha," the poor old lady screamed in hysteric sentences.

"I, ma'am, ask a member of this family to marry a drawing master's daughter?"

"Her mother was a Montmorency," cried out the old lady, pulling at the bell with all her might.

"Her mother was an opera girl, and she has been on the stage or worse herself," said Mrs. Bute.

Miss Crawley gave a final scream and fell back in a faint. They were forced to take her back to the room which she had just quitted. One fit of hysterics succeeded another. The doctor was sent for—the apothecary arrived. Mrs. Bute took up the post of nurse by her bedside. "Her relations ought to be round about her," that amiable woman said.

She had scarcely been carried up to her room when a new person arrived to whom it was also necessary to break the news. This was Sir Pitt. "Where's Becky?" he said, coming in. "Where's her traps? She's coming with me to Queen's Crawley."

"Have you not heard the astonishing intelligence regarding her surreptitious union?" Briggs asked.

"What's that to me?" Sir Pitt asked. "I know she's married. That makes no odds. Tell her to come down at once, and not keep me."

"Are you not aware, sir," Miss Briggs asked, "that she has left our roof, to the dismay of Miss Crawley, who is nearly killed by the intelligence of Captain Rawdon's union with her?"

When Sir Pitt Crawley heard that Rebecca was married to his son, he broke out into a fury of language which it would do no good to repeat in this place, as indeed it sent poor Briggs shuddering out of the room, and with her we will shut the door upon the figure of the frenzied old man, wild with hatred and insane with baffled desire.

One day after he went to Queen's Crawley, he burst like a madman into the room she had used when there—dashed open her boxes with his foot, and flung about her papers, clothes, and other relics. Miss Horrocks, the butler's daughter, took some of them. The children dressed themselves and acted plays in the others. It was but a few days after the poor mother had gone to her lonely burying place and was laid, unwept and disregarded, in a vault full of strangers.

"Suppose the old lady doesn't come to," Rawdon said to his little wife as they sat together in the snug little Brompton lodgings. She had been trying the new piano all the morning. The new gloves fitted her to a nicety, the new shawls became her wonderfully, the new rings glittered on her little hands, and the new watch ticked at her waist. "Suppose she don't come round, eh, Becky?"

"*I'll* make your fortune," she said, and Delilah patted Samson's cheek.

"You can do anything," he said, kissing the little hand. "By Jove you can, and we'll drive down to the Star and Garter and dine, by Jove."

CHAPTER XVI

It was rather late in the sale. The excellent drawing-room furniture by the best makers, the rare and famous wines selected regardless of cost and with the well-known taste of the purchaser, the rich and complete set of family plate, had been sold on the previous days. Certain of the best wines (which all had a great character among amateurs in the neighborhood) had been purchased for his master, who knew them very well, by the butler of our friend John Osborne, Esquire, of Russell Square.

"No. 329," roared Mr. Hammerdown. "Portrait of a gentleman on an elephant. Who'll bid for the gentleman on the elephant? Lift up the picture, Blowman, and let the company examine this lot." A long, pale, military-looking gentleman seated demurely at the mahogany table could not help grinning as this valuable lot was shown by Mr. Blowman. Someone bid five shillings, at which the military gentleman looked toward the quarter from which this splendid offer had come, and there saw another officer with a young lady on his arm, who both appeared to be highly amused with the scene, and to whom finally this lot was knocked down for a half a guinea.

Of all the other articles which Mr. Hammerdown had the honor to offer for public competition that day it is not our purpose to make mention save of one only, a little square piano, which came down from the upper regions of the house (the state grand piano having been disposed of previously). This the young lady tried with a rapid and skillful hand, and for it, when its turn came, her agent began to bid. But there was an opposition here. The Hebrew aide-de-camp in the service of the officer at the table bid against the Hebrew gentleman employed by the elephant-purchasers, and a brisk battle ensued over this little piano.

At last, when the competition had been prolonged for some time, the elephant Captain and lady desisted from the race, and the hammer coming down, the auctioneer said, "Mr. Lewis, twenty-five," and Mr. Lewis's chief thus became the proprietor of the little square piano. Having effected the purchase, he sat up as if he was greatly relieved, and the unsuccessful competitors catching a glimpse of him at this moment, the lady said to her friend:

"Why, Rawdon, it's Captain Dobbin."

I suppose Becky was discontented with the new piano her husband had hired for her, or perhaps the proprietors of that instrument had fetched it away, declining further credit, or perhaps she had a particular attachment for the one which she had just tried to purchase, recollecting it in old days when she used to play upon it in the little sitting-room of our dear Amelia Sedley.

The sale was at the old house in Russell Square, where we passed some eve-

nings together at the beginning of this story. Good old John Sedley was a ruined man. His name had been proclaimed as a defaulter on the Stock Exchange, and his bankruptcy and commercial extermination had followed. Mr. Osborne's butler came to buy some of the famous port wine to transfer to the cellars over the way. With respect to the piano, as it had been Amelia's and as she might miss it and want one now, and as Captain William Dobbin could no more play upon it than he could dance on the tightrope, it is probable that he did not purchase the instrument for his own use.

In a word, it arrived that evening at a wonderful small cottage in a street leading from the Fulham Road, one of those streets which have the finest romantic names (this was called St. Adelaide Villas, Anna-Marie Road, West), where the houses look like baby houses; where the people looking out of the first-floor windows must infallibly, as you think, sit with their feet in the parlors; where the shrubs in the little gardens in front bloom with a perennial display of little children's pinafores, little red socks, caps, etc. (polyandria polygynia); whence you hear the sound of jingling spinets and women singing; where little porter pots hang on the railings sunning themselves; whither of evenings you see City clerks padding wearily—here it was that Mr. Clapp, the clerk of Mr. Sedley, had his domicile, and in this asylum the good old gentleman hid his head with his wife and daughter when the crash came.

Jos Sedley had acted as a man of his disposition would when the announcement of the family misfortune reached him. He did not come to London, but he wrote to his mother to draw upon his agents for whatever money was wanted, so that his kind, broken-spirited old parents had no present poverty to fear. This done, Jos went on at the boardinghouse at Cheltenham pretty much as before. He drove his curricle, he drank his claret, he played his rubber, he told his Indian stories, and the Irish widow consoled and flattered him as usual. His present of money, needful as it was, made little impression on his parents.

I hope the reader has much too good an opinion of Captain and Mrs. Crawley to suppose that they ever would have dreamed of paying a visit to so remote a district as Bloomsbury if they thought the family whom they proposed to honor with a visit were not merely out of fashion, but out of money, and could be serviceable to them in no possible manner. Rebecca was entirely surprised at the sight of the comfortable old house where she had met with no small kindness ransacked by brokers and bargainers, and its quiet family treasures given up to public desecration and plunder. A month after her flight, she had bethought her of Amelia, and Rawdon, with a horselaugh, had expressed a perfect willingness to see young George Osborne again. "He's a very agreeable acquaintance, Beck," the wag added. "I'd like to sell him another horse, Beck. I'd like to play a few more games at billiards with him. He'd be what I call *useful* just now, Mrs. C—ha, ha!" by which sort of speech it is not to be supposed that Rawdon Crawley had a deliberate desire to cheat Mr. Osborne at play, but only wished to take that fair advantage of him which almost every sporting gentleman in Vanity Fair considers to be his due from his neighbor.

The old aunt was long in "coming to." A month had elapsed. Rawdon was denied the door by Mr. Bowls, his servants could not get a lodgment in the house at Park Lane, his letters were sent back unopened. Miss Crawley never stirred out—she was unwell—and Mrs. Bute remained still and never left her. Crawley and his wife both of them augured evil from the continued presence of Mrs. Bute.

"Gad, I begin to perceive now why she was always bringing us together at Queen's Crawley," Rawdon said.

"What an artful little woman!" ejaculated Rebecca.

"Well, *I* don't regret it, if you don't," the Captain cried, still in an amorous rapture with his wife, who rewarded him with a kiss by way of reply, and was indeed not a little gratified by the generous confidence of her husband.

"If he had but a little more brains," she thought to herself, "I might make something of him." But she never let him perceive the opinion she had of him, listened with indefatigable complacency to his stories of the stable and the mess, laughed at all his jokes, felt the greatest interest in Jack Spatterdash, whose cab horse had come down, and Bob Martingale, who had been taken up in a gambling house, and Tom Cinqbars, who was going to ride the steeplechase. When he came home she was alert and happy, when he went out she pressed him to go, when he stayed at home, she played and sang for him, made him good drinks, superintended his dinner, warmed his slippers, and steeped his soul in comfort. The best of women (I have heard my grandmother say) are hypocrites. We don't know how much they hide from us, how watchful they are when they seem most artless and confidential, how often those frank smiles which they wear so easily are traps to cajole or elude or disarm—I don't mean in your mere coquettes, but your domestic models and paragons of female virtue. Who has not seen a woman hide the dullness of a stupid husband, or coax the fury of a savage one? We accept this amiable slavishness, and praise a woman for it; we call this pretty treachery truth.

By these attentions, that veteran rake, Rawdon Crawley, found himself converted into a very happy and submissive married man. His former haunts knew him not. They asked about him once or twice at his clubs, but did not miss him much—in those booths of Vanity Fair people seldom do miss each other. His secluded wife ever smiling and cheerful, his little comfortable lodgings, snug meals, and homely evenings had all the charms of novelty and secrecy. The marriage was not yet declared to the world or published in the *Morning Post*. All his creditors would have come rushing on him in a body had they known that he was united to a woman without fortune. "My relations won't cry fie upon me," Becky said, with rather a bitter laugh, and she was quite contented to wait until the old aunt should be reconciled before she claimed her place in society. So she lived at Brompton and meanwhile saw no one, or only those few of her husband's male companions who were admitted into her little dining-room. These were all charmed with her. The little dinners, the laughing and chatting, the music afterward, delighted all who participated in these enjoyments. Major Martingale never thought about asking to see the marriage license. Captain Cinqbars was perfectly enchanted with her skill in

making punch. And young Lieutenant Spatterdash (who was fond of piquet, and whom Crawley would often invite) was evidently and quickly smitten by Mrs. Crawley. But her own circumspection and modesty never forsook her for a moment, and Crawley's reputation as a fire-eating and jealous warrior was a further and complete defense to his little wife.

There are gentlemen of very good blood and fashion in this city who never have entered a lady's drawing-room, so that though Rawdon Crawley's marriage might be talked about in his county—where, of course, Mrs. Bute had spread the news—in London it was doubted, or not heeded, or not talked about at all. He lived comfortably on credit. He had a large capital of debts, which, laid out judiciously, will carry a man along for many years, and on which certain men about town contrive to live a hundred times better than even men with ready money can do.

Truth obliges us to confess that Rebecca had married a gentleman of this order. Everything was plentiful in his house but ready money, of which their ménage pretty early felt the want. And reading the *Gazette* one day, and coming upon the announcement of "Lieutenant G. Osborne to be captain by purchase, vice Smith, who exchanges," Rawdon uttered that sentiment regarding Amelia's lover which ended in the visit to Russell Square.

When Rawdon and his wife wished to communicate with Captain Dobbin at the sale, and to know particulars of the catastrophe which had befallen Rebecca's old acquaintances, the Captain had vanished, and such information as they got was from a stray porter or broker at the auction.

"Look at them with their hooked beaks," Becky said, getting into the buggy, her picture under her arm, in great glee. "They're like vultures after a battle."

"Don't know. Never was in action, my dear. Ask Martingale. He was in Spain, aide-de-camp to General Blazes."

"He was a very kind old man, Mr. Sedley," Rebecca said. "I'm really sorry he's gone wrong."

"Oh, stockbrokers—bankrupts—used to it, you know," Rawdon replied, cutting a fly off the horse's ear.

"I wish we could have afforded some of the plate, Rawdon," the wife continued sentimentally. "Five and twenty guineas was monstrously dear for that little piano. We chose it at Broadwood's for Amelia when she came from school. It only cost five and thirty then."

"What d'ye-call'em—'Osborne,' will cry off now, I suppose, since the family is smashed. How cut-up your pretty little friend will be, hey, Becky?"

"I dare say she'll recover it," Becky said with a smile, and they drove on and talked about something else.

CHAPTER XVII

Our surprised story now finds itself for a moment among very famous events and personages, and hanging onto the skirts of history. When the eagles of

Napoleon Bonaparte, the Corsican upstart, were flying from Provence, where they had perched after a brief sojourn in Elba, and from steeple to steeple until they reached the towers of Notre Dame, I wonder whether the Imperial birds had any eye for a little corner of the parish of Bloomsbury, London, which you might have thought so quiet that even the whirring and flapping of those mighty wings would pass unobserved there?

"Napoleon has landed at Cannes." Such news might create a panic at Vienna and cause Russia to drop his cards and take Prussia into a corner, and Talleyrand and Metternich to wag their heads together. But how was this intelligence to affect a young lady in Russell Square, before whose door the watchman sang the hours when she was asleep; who if she strolled in the square, was guarded there by the railings and the beadle; who if she walked ever so short a distance to buy a ribbon in Southampton Row, was followed by Black Sambo with an enormous cane; who was always cared for, dressed, put to bed, and watched over by ever so many guardian angels, with and without wages? *Bon Dieu*, I say, is it not hard that the fateful rush of the great Imperial struggle can't take place without affecting a poor little harmless girl of eighteen who is occupied in billing and cooing or working muslin collars in Russell Square? Yes, Napoleon is flinging his last stake, and poor little Emmy Sedley's happiness forms somehow part of it.

In the first place, her father's fortune was swept down with that fatal news. All his speculations had of late gone wrong with the luckless old gentleman. Ventures had failed, merchants had broken, funds had risen when he calculated they would fall. What need to particularize? If success is rare and slow, everybody knows how quick and easy ruin is. Old Sedley had kept his own sad counsel. Everything seemed to go on as usual in the quiet, opulent house—the good-natured mistress pursuing quite unsuspiciously her bustling idleness and daily easy vocations, the daughter absorbed still in one selfish, tender thought and quite regardless of all the world besides—when that final crash came under which the worthy family fell.

One night Mrs. Sedley was writing cards for a party. The Osbornes had given one, and she must not be behindhand. John Sedley, who had come home very late from the City, sat silent at the chimney side while his wife was prattling to him. Emmy had gone up to her room ailing and low-spirited.

"She's not happy," the mother went on. "George Osborne neglects her. I've no patience with the airs of those people. The girls have not been in the house these three weeks, and George has been twice in town without coming. Edward Dale saw him at the opera. Edward would marry her, I'm sure, and there's Captain Dobbin, who I think would—only I hate all army men. Such a dandy as George has become. With his military airs, indeed! We must show some folks that we're as good as they. Only give Edward Dale any encouragement and you'll see. We must have a party, Mr. S. Why don't you speak, John? Shall I say Tuesday fortnight? Why don't you answer? Good God, John, what has happened?"

John Sedley sprang up out of his chair to meet his wife, who ran to him. He seized her in his arms and said with a hasty voice: "We're ruined, Mary. We've

got the world to begin over again, dear. It's best that you should know all, and at once." As he spoke, he trembled in every limb, and almost fell. He thought the news would have overpowered his wife—his wife, to whom he had never said a hard word. But it was he that was the most moved, sudden as the shock was to her. When he sank back into his seat, it was the wife that took the office of consoler. She took his trembling hand and kissed it and put it round her neck. She called him her John—her dear John—her old man—her kind old man. She poured out a hundred words of incoherent love and tenderness; her faithful voice and simple caresses wrought this sad heart up to an inexpressible delight and anguish, and cheered and solaced his overburdened soul.

Only once in the course of the long night, as they sat together and poor Sedley opened his pent-up soul and told the story of his losses and embarrassments—the treason of some of his oldest friends, the manly kindness of some, from whom he never could have expected it—in a general confession, only once did the faithful wife give way to emotion.

"My God, my God, it will break Emmy's heart," she said.

The father had forgotten the poor girl. She was lying awake and unhappy, overhead. In the midst of friends, home, and kind parents, she was alone. To how many people can anyone tell all? Who will be open where there is no sympathy, or has call to speak to those who never can understand? Our gentle Amelia was thus solitary. She had no confidante, so to speak, ever since she had anything to confide. She could not tell the old mother her doubts and cares; the would-be sisters seemed every day more strange to her. And she had misgivings and fears which she dared not acknowledge to herself, though she was always secretly brooding over them.

Her heart tried to persist in asserting that George Osborne was worthy and faithful to her, though she knew otherwise. How many a thing had she said and got no echo from him! How many suspicions of selfishness and indifference had she to encounter and obstinately overcome! To whom could the poor little martyr tell these daily struggles and tortures? Her hero himself only half understood her. She did not dare to own that the man she loved was her inferior, or to feel that she had given her heart away too soon. Given once, the pure, bashful maiden was too modest, too tender, too trustful, too weak, too much woman, to recall it.

So imprisoned and tortured was this gentle little heart when in the month of March, Anno Domini 1815, Napoleon landed at Cannes, and Louis XVIII fled, and all Europe was in alarm, and the funds fell, and old John Sedley was ruined.

We are not going to follow the worthy old stockbroker through those last pangs and agonies of ruin through which he passed before his commercial demise befell. They declared him at the Stock Exchange; he was absent from his house of business; his bills were protested, his act of bankruptcy formal. The house and furniture of Russell Square were seized and sold up, and he and his family were thrust away, as we have seen, to hide their heads where they might.

Of all Sedley's opponents in his debates with his creditors which now ensued, and harassed the feelings of the humiliated old gentleman so severely that in six

weeks he oldened more than he had done for fifteen years before, the most determined and obstinate seemed to be John Osborne, his old friend and neighbor—John Osborne, whom he had set up in life, who was under a hundred obligations to him, and whose son was to marry Sedley's daughter. Any one of these circumstances would account for the bitterness of Osborne's opposition.

Osborne had the intolerable sense of former benefits to goad and irritate him; these are always a cause of hostility aggravated. Finally, he had to break off the match between Sedley's daughter and his son; and as it had gone very far indeed, and as the poor girl's happiness and perhaps character were compromised, it was necessary to show the strongest reasons for the rupture, and for John Osborne to prove John Sedley to be a very bad character indeed.

At the meetings of creditors, then, he comported himself with a savageness and scorn toward Sedley which almost succeeded in breaking the heart of that ruined, bankrupt man. On George's intercourse with Amelia he put an instant veto—menacing the youth with maledictions if he broke his commands, and vilipending the poor innocent girl as the basest and most artful of vixens. One of the great conditions of anger and hatred is that you must tell and believe lies against the hated object, in order, as we said, to be consistent.

When the great crash came—the announcement of ruin and the departure from Russell Square, and the declaration that all was over between her and George, all over between her and love, her and happiness, her and faith in the world—a brutal letter from John Osborne told her in a few curt lines that her father's conduct had been of such a nature that all engagements between the families were at an end—when the final award came, it did not shock her so much as her parents, as her mother rather, expected (for John Sedley himself was entirely prostrate in the ruins of his own affairs and shattered honor). Amelia took the news very palely and calmly. It was only the confirmation of the dark presages which had long gone before. It was the mere reading of the sentence—of the crime she had long ago been guilty, the crime of loving wrongly, too violently, against reason. She told no more of her thoughts now than she had before. She seemed scarcely more unhappy now, when convinced all hope was over, than before, when she felt but dared not confess that it was gone. So she changed from the large house to the small one without any mark or difference, remained in her little room for the most part, pined silently, and died away day by day.

Whenever old John Sedley thought of the affair between George and Amelia, or alluded to it, it was with bitterness almost as great as Mr. Osborne himself had shown. He cursed Osborne and his family as heartless, wicked, and ungrateful. No power on earth, he swore, would induce him to marry his daughter to the son of such a villain, and he ordered Emmy to banish George from her mind, and to return all the presents and letters which she had ever had from him.

She promised acquiescence, and tried to obey. She put up the two or three trinkets, and as for the letters, she drew them out of the place where she kept them and read them over—as if she did not know them by heart already—but she could not part with them. That effort was too much for her. She placed

them back in her bosom again—as you have seen a woman nurse a child that is dead. Young Amelia felt that she would die or lose her senses outright if torn away from this last consolation. How she used to blush and lighten up when those letters came! How she used to trip away with a beating heart so that she might read unseen! If they were cold, yet how perversely this fond little soul interpreted them into warmth! If they were short or selfish, what excuses she found for the writer!

If Amelia could have heard the comments regarding her which were made in the circle from which her father's ruin had just driven her, she would have seen what her own crimes were, and how entirely her character was jeopardized. Such criminal imprudence Mrs. Smith never knew of, such horrid familiarities Mrs. Brown had always condemned, and the end might be a warning to *her* daughters. "Captain Osborne of course could not marry a bankrupt's daughter," the Misses Dobbin said. "It was quite enough to have been swindled by the father. As for that little Amelia, her folly had really passed all—"

"All what?" Captain Dobbin roared out. "Haven't they been engaged ever since they were children? Wasn't it as good as a marriage? Dare any soul on earth breathe a word against the sweetest, the purest, the tenderest, the most angelical of young women?"

"La, William, don't be highty-tighty with *us*. We're not men. We can't fight you," Miss Jane said. "We've said nothing against Miss Sedley but that her conduct throughout was *most imprudent*, not to call it by any worse name, and that her parents are people who certainly merit their misfortunes."

"Hadn't you better, now that Miss Sedley is free, propose for her yourself, William?" Miss Ann asked sarcastically. "It would be a most eligible family connection. He! he!"

"I marry her!" Dobbin said, blushing very much and talking quick. "If you are so ready, young ladies, to chop and change, do you suppose that *she* is? Laugh and sneer at that angel. She can't hear it, and she's miserable and unfortunate, and deserves to be laughed at. Go on joking, Ann. You're the wit of the family, and the others like to hear it."

"I must tell you again we're not in a barrack, William," Miss Ann remarked.

"In a barrack, by Jove—I wish anybody in a barrack would say what you do," cried out this uproused British lion. "I should like to hear a man breathe a word against her, by Jupiter. But men don't talk in this way, Ann, it's only women who get together and hiss, and shriek, and cackle. There, get away—don't begin to cry. I only said you were a couple of geese," Will Dobbin said, perceiving Miss Ann's pink eyes were beginning to moisten as usual. "Well, you're not geese, you're swans—anything you like, only do, do leave Miss Sedley alone."

Anything like William's infatuation about that silly little, flirting, ogling thing was never known, the mamma and sisters agreed together in thinking, and they trembled lest, her engagement being off with Osborne, she should take up immediately her other admirer and Captain.

"It is a mercy, Mamma, that the regiment is ordered abroad," the girls said. "*This* danger, at any rate, is spared our brother."

Such, indeed, was the fact, and so it is that the French Emperor comes in to perform a part in this domestic comedy of Vanity Fair which we are now playing, and which would never have been enacted without the intervention of this august mute personage. It was he that ruined the Bourbons and Mr. John Sedley. It was he whose arrival in his capital called up all France in arms to defend him there, and all Europe to oust him. While the French nation and army were swearing fidelity round the eagles in the Champ de Mars, four mighty European hosts were getting in motion for the great *chasse à l'aigle*, and one of these was a British army, of which two heroes of ours, Captain Dobbin and Captain Osborne, formed a portion.

The news of Napoleon's escape and landing was received by the gallant —th with a fiery delight and enthusiasm which everybody can understand who knows that famous corps. From the colonel to the smallest drummer in the regiment, all were filled with hope and ambition and patriotic fury, and thanked the French Emperor as for a personal kindness in coming to disturb the peace of Europe. Now was the time the —th had so long panted for—to show their comrades in arms that they could fight as well as the Peninsula veterans, and that all the pluck and valor of the —th had not been killed by the West Indies and the yellow fever. Stubble and Spooney looked to get their companies without purchase. Before the end of the campaign (which she resolved to share) Mrs. Major O'Dowd hoped to write herself Mrs. Colonel O'Dowd, C.B. Our two friends were quite as much excited as the rest, and each in his way—Mr. Dobbin very quietly, Mr. Osborne very loudly and energetically—was bent upon doing his duty, and gaining his share of honor and distinction.

The agitation thrilling through the country and army in consequence of this news was so great that private matters were little heeded, and hence probably George Osborne, just gazetted to his company, busy with preparations for the march which must come inevitably, and panting for further promotion, was not so much affected by other incidents which would have interested him at a more quiet period. He was not, it must be confessed, very much cast down by good old Mr. Sedley's catastrophe. He tried his new uniform, which became him very handsomely, on the day when the first meeting of the creditors of the unfortunate gentleman took place. His father told him of the wicked, rascally, shameful conduct of the bankrupt, reminded him of what he had said about Amelia and that their connection was broken off forever, and gave him that evening a good sum of money to pay for the new clothes and epaulets in which he looked so well. Money was always useful to this free-handed young fellow, and he took it without many words. The bills were up in the Sedley house, where he had passed so many, many happy hours. He could see them as he walked from home that night (to the Old Slaughters', where he put up when in town) shining white in the moon. That comfortable home was shut, then, upon Amelia and her parents. Where had they taken refuge? The thought of their ruin affected him not a little. He was very melancholy that night in the coffeeroom at the Slaughters', and drank a good deal, as his comrades remarked there.

Dobbin came in presently, cautioned him about the drink—which he only

took, he said, because he was deuced low—but when his friend began to put to him clumsy inquiries, and asked him for news in a significant manner, Osborne declined entering into conversation with him, avowing, however, that he was devilish disturbed and unhappy.

Three days afterward, Dobbin found Osborne in his room at the barracks, his head on the table, a number of papers about, the young Captain evidently in a state of great despondency. "She—she's sent me back some things I gave her—some damned trinkets. Look here!" There was a little packet directed in the well-known hand to Captain George Osborne, and some things lying about —a ring, a silver knife he had bought as a boy for her at a fair, a gold chain, and a locket with hair in it. "It's all over," said he, with a groan of sickening remorse. "Look, Will, you may read it if you like."

There was a little letter of a few lines, to which he pointed, which said:

> My papa has ordered me to return to you these presents, which you made in happier days to me, and I am to write to you for the last time. I think, I know, you feel as much as I do the blow which has come upon us. It is I that absolve you from an engagement which is impossible in our present misery. I am sure you had no share in it, or in the cruel suspicions of Mr. Osborne, which are the hardest of all our griefs to bear. Farewell. Farewell. I pray God to strengthen me to bear this and other calamities, and to bless you always A.
>
> I shall often play upon the piano—your piano. It was like you to send it.

"Where are they?" Osborne asked, after a long talk and a long pause—and in truth with no little shame at thinking that he had taken no steps to follow her. "Where are they? There's no address to the note."

Dobbin knew. He had not merely sent the piano, but had written a note to Mrs. Sedley and asked permission to come and see her—and he had seen her, and Amelia too, yesterday, before he came down to Chatham, and what is more, he had brought that farewell letter and packet which had so moved them.

The good-natured fellow had found Mrs. Sedley only too willing to receive him, and greatly agitated by the arrival of the piano, which, as she conjectured, *must* have come from George and was a signal of amity on his part. Captain Dobbin did not correct this error of the worthy lady, but listened to all her story of complaints and misfortunes with great sympathy—condoled with her losses and privations, and agreed in reprehending the cruel conduct of Mr. Osborne toward his first benefactor. When she had eased her overflowing bosom somewhat and poured forth many of her sorrows, he had the courage to ask actually to see Amelia, who was above in her room as usual, and whom her mother led trembling downstairs.

Her appearance was so ghastly and her look of despair so pathetic that honest William Dobbin was frightened as he beheld it, and read the most fatal forebodings in that pale, fixed face. After sitting in his company a minute or two, she put the packet into his hand, and said:

"Take this to Captain Osborne, if you please, and—and I hope he's quite well—and it was very kind of you to come and see us—and we like our new house very much. And I—I think I'll go upstairs, Mamma, for I'm not very strong."

And with this, and a curtsy and a smile, the poor child went her way. The mother as she led her up cast back looks of anguish toward Dobbin. The good fellow wanted no such appeal. He loved her himself too fondly for that. Inexpressible grief and pity and terror pursued him, and he came away as if he was a criminal after seeing her.

When Osborne heard that his friend had found her, he made hot and anxious inquiries regarding the poor child. How was she? How did she look? What did she say? His comrade took his hand, and looked him in the face.

"George, she's dying," William Dobbin said, and could speak no more.

There was a buxom Irish servant girl who performed all the duties of the little house where the Sedley family had found refuge, and this girl had in vain, on many previous days, striven to give Amelia aid or consolation. Emmy was much too sad to answer, or even to be aware of, the attempts the other was making in her favor.

Four hours after the talk between Dobbin and Osborne, the servantmaid came into Amelia's room, where she sat as usual brooding silently over her letters—her little treasures. The girl, smiling and looking arch and happy, made many trials to attract poor Emmy's attention, who, however, took no heed of her.

"Miss Emmy!" said the girl.

"I'm coming," Emmy said, not looking around.

"There's a message," the maid went on. "There's something—somebody—sure, here's a new letter for you—don't be reading them old ones any more." And she gave her the letter, which Emmy took and read.

"I must see you," the letter said. "Dearest Emmy—dearest love—dearest wife, come to me."

George and her mother were outside, waiting until she had read the letter.

CHAPTER XVIII

We have seen how Mrs. Firkin, the lady's maid, as soon as any event of importance to the Crawley family came to her knowledge felt bound to communicate it to Mrs. Bute Crawley at the rectory, and have before mentioned how particularly kind and attentive that good-natured lady was to Miss Crawley's confidential servant. She had been a gracious friend to Miss Briggs, the companion, also, and had secured the latter's goodwill by a number of those attentions and promises which cost so little in the making and are yet so valuable and agreeable to the recipient. Mrs. Bute had told Briggs and Firkin so often of the depth of her affection for them, and what *she* would do if she had Miss Crawley's fortune for friends so excellent and attached, that the ladies

in question had the deepest regard for her, and felt as much gratitude and confidence as if Mrs. Bute had loaded them with the most expensive favors.

Rawdon Crawley, on the other hand, like a selfish heavy dragoon as he was, never took the least trouble to conciliate his aunt's aides-de-camp, showed his contempt for the pair with entire frankness. As his aunt too made a butt of Briggs, the Captain followed the example and leveled his jokes at her—jokes about as delicate as a kick from his charger. Whereas Mrs. Bute consulted her in matters of taste or difficulty, admired her poetry, and by a thousand acts of kindness and politeness showed her appreciation of Briggs. During Rawdon Crawley's prosperity, he was only obeyed with sulky acquiescence; when his disgrace came, there was nobody to help or pity him. Whereas when Mrs. Bute took the command at Miss Crawley's house, the garrison there were charmed to act under such a leader, expecting all sorts of promotion from her promises, her generosity, and her kind words.

That he would consider himself beaten after one defeat, and make no attempt to regain the position he had lost, Mrs. Bute Crawley never allowed herself to suppose. She knew Rebecca to be too clever and spirited and desperate a woman to submit without a struggle, and felt that she must prepare for that combat, and be incessantly watchful against assault, or mine, or surprise.

In the first place, though she held the town, was she sure of the principal inhabitant? Would Miss Crawley herself hold out, and had she not a secret longing to welcome back the ousted adversary? The old lady liked Rawdon and Rebecca, who amused her. Mrs. Bute could not disguise from herself the fact that none of her party could so contribute to the pleasures of the town-bred lady. "My girls' singing, after that little odious governess's, I know is unbearable," the candid Rector's wife owned to herself. "She always used to go to sleep when Martha and Louisa played their duets. Jim's stiff college manners and poor dear Bute's talk about his dogs and horses always annoyed her. If I took her to the rectory, she would grow angry with us all, and fly, I know she would, and might fall into that horrid Rawdon's clutches again and be the victim of that little viper of a Sharp. Meanwhile, it is clear to me that she is exceedingly unwell and cannot move for some weeks, at any rate, during which we must think of some plan to protect her from the arts of those unprincipled people."

In the very best of moments, if anybody told Miss Crawley that she was, or looked, ill, the trembling old lady sent off for her doctor, and I dare say she *was* very unwell after the sudden family event, which might serve to shake stronger nerves than hers. At least, Mrs. Bute thought it was her duty to inform the physician, and the apothecary, and the dame de compagnie, and the domestics that Miss Crawley was in a most critical state, and that they were to act accordingly. She had the street laid knee-deep with straw, and the knocker put by with Mr. Bowls's plate. She insisted that the doctor should call twice a day, and deluged her patient with draughts every two hours. When anybody entered the room, she uttered a *shshshsh* so sibilant and ominous that it frightened the poor old lady in her bed, from which she could not look without seeing Mrs.

Bute's beady eyes eagerly fixed on her as the latter sat steadfast in the armchair by the bedside. There Miss Crawley lay for days—ever so many days—Mrs. Bute reading books of devotion to her; for nights, long nights, during which she had to hear the watchman sing, the night light sputter, visited at midnight, the last thing, by the stealthy apothecary, and then left to look at Mrs. Bute's twinkling eyes or the flicks of yellow that the rushlight threw on the dreary, darkened ceiling. Hygeia herself would have fallen sick under such a regimen, and how much more this poor old nervous victim? It has been said that when she was in health and good spirits, this venerable inhabitant of Vanity Fair had as free notions about religion and morals as Monsieur de Voltaire himself could desire, but when illness overtook her, it was aggravated by the most dreadful terrors of death, and an utter cowardice took possession of the prostrate old sinner.

"If that poor man of mine had a head on his shoulders," Mrs. Bute Crawley thought to herself, "how useful he might be under present circumstances to this unhappy old lady! He might make her repent of her shocking freethinking ways; he might urge her to do her duty and cast off that odious reprobate who has disgraced himself and his family; and he might induce her to do justice to my dear girls and the two boys, who require and deserve, I am sure, every assistance which their relatives can give them."

And as the hatred of vice is always a progress toward virtue, Mrs. Bute Crawley endeavored to instill into her sister-in-law a proper abhorrence for all Rawdon Crawley's manifold sins, of which his uncle's wife brought forward such a catalogue as indeed would have served to condemn a whole regiment of young officers. If a man has committed wrong in life, I don't know any moralist more anxious to point his errors out to the world than his own relations—so Mrs. Bute showed a perfect family interest and knowledge of Rawdon's history. She had all the particulars of that ugly quarrel with Captain Marker in which Rawdon, wrong from the beginning, ended in shooting the Captain. She knew how the unhappy Lord Dovedale, whose mamma had taken a house at Oxford so that he might be educated there, and who had never touched a card in his life till he came to London, was perverted by Rawdon at the Cocoa Tree, made helplessly tipsy by this abominable seducer and perverter of youth, and fleeced of four thousand pounds. She described with the most vivid minuteness the agonies of the country families whom he had ruined—the sons whom he had plunged into dishonor and poverty—the daughters whom he had inveigled into perdition. She knew the poor tradesmen who were bankrupt by his extravagance—the mean shifts and rogueries with which he had ministered to it—the astounding falsehoods by which he had imposed upon the most generous of aunts, and the ingratitude and ridicule by which he had repaid her sacrifices. She imparted these stories gradually to Miss Crawley, gave her the whole benefit of them, felt it to be her bounden duty as a Christian woman and mother of a family to do so, had not the smallest remorse or compunction for the victim whom her tongue was immolating—nay, very likely thought her act was quite meritorious, and plumed herself upon her resolute manner of performing it. Yes, if a man's character is to be abused, say what you will, there's

nobody like a relation to do the business. And one is bound to own regarding this unfortunate wretch of a Rawdon Crawley that the mere truth was enough to condemn him, and that all inventions of scandal were quite superfluous pains on his friends' part.

Rebecca, too, being now a relative, came in for the fullest share of Mrs. Bute's kind inquiries. This indefatigable pursuer of truth (having given strict orders that the door was to be denied to all emissaries or letters from Rawdon) took Miss Crawley's carriage and drove to her old friend Miss Pinkerton, at Minerva House, Chiswick Mall, to whom she announced the dreadful intelligence of Captain Rawdon's seduction by Miss Sharp, and from whom she got sundry strange particulars regarding the ex-governess's birth and early history. The friend of the lexicographer had plenty of information to give. Miss Jemima was made to fetch the drawing master's receipts and letters. This one was from a sponging house, that entreated an advance, another was full of gratitude for Rebecca's reception by the ladies of Chiswick, and the last document from the unlucky artist's pen was that in which, from his dying bed, he recommended his orphan child to Miss Pinkerton's protection. There were juvenile letters and petitions from Rebecca, too, in the collection, imploring aid for her father or declaring her own gratitude.

From Miss Pinkerton's the indefatigable Mrs. Bute followed the track of Sharp and his daughter back to the lodgings in Greek Street which the defunct painter had occupied, and where portraits of the landlady in white satin and of the husband in brass buttons, done by Sharp in lieu of a quarter's rent, still decorated the parlor walls. Mrs. Stokes was a communicative person, and quickly told all she knew about Mr. Sharp—how dissolute and poor he was, how good-natured and amusing, how he was always hunted by bailiffs and duns, how, to the landlady's horror, though she never could abide the woman, he did not marry his wife till a short time before her death. And what a queer little wild vixen his daughter was—how she kept them all laughing with her fun and mimicry, how she used to fetch the gin from the public house and was known in all the studios in the quarter. In brief, Mrs. Bute got such a full account of her new niece's parentage, education, and behavior as would scarcely have pleased Rebecca had the latter known that such inquiries were being made concerning her.

Of all these industrious researches Miss Crawley had the full benefit. Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was the daughter of an opera girl. She had danced herself. She had been a model to the painters. She was brought up as became her mother's daughter. She drank gin with her father, etc., etc. It was a lost woman who was married to a lost man, and the moral to be inferred from Mrs. Bute's tale was that the knavery of the pair was irremediable, and that no properly conducted person should ever notice them again.

These were the materials which prudent Mrs. Bute gathered together in Park Lane, the provisions and ammunition as it were with which she fortified the house against the siege which she knew that Rawdon and his wife would lay to Miss Crawley.

But if a fault may be found with her arrangements, it is this, that she was

too eager. She managed rather too well; undoubtedly she made Miss Crawley more ill than was necessary; and though the old invalid succumbed to her authority, it was so harassing and severe that the victim would be inclined to escape at the very first chance which fell in her way. Managing women, the ornaments of their sex—women who order everything for everybody, and know so much better than any person concerned what is good for their neighbors—don't sometimes speculate upon the possibility of a domestic revolt, or upon other extreme consequences resulting from their overstrained authority.

Thus for instance Mrs. Bute, with the best intentions no doubt in the world, and wearing herself to death as she did by forgoing sleep, dinner, fresh air, for the sake of her invalid sister-in-law, carried her conviction of the old lady's illness so far that she almost managed her into her coffin. She pointed out her sacrifices and their results one day to the constant apothecary, Mr. Clump.

"I am sure, my dear Mr. Clump," she said, "no efforts of mine have been wanting to restore our dear invalid, whom the ingratitude of her nephew has laid on the bed of sickness. *I* never shrink from personal discomfort, *I* never refuse to sacrifice myself."

"Your devotion, it must be confessed, is admirable," Mr. Clump says, with a low bow, "but—"

"I would lay down my life for my duty, or for any member of my husband's family," Mrs. Bute interposed.

"Yes, madam, if need were, but we don't want Mrs. Bute Crawley to be a martyr," Clump said gallantly. "Dr. Squills and myself have both considered Miss Crawley's case with every anxiety and care, as you may suppose. We see her low-spirited and nervous. Family events have agitated her."

"Her nephew will come to perdition!" Mrs. Crawley cried.

"Have agitated her, and you arrived like a guardian angel, my dear madam, a positive guardian angel, I assure you, to soothe her under the pressure of calamity. But Dr. Squills and I were thinking that our amiable friend is not in such a state as renders confinement to her bed necessary. She is depressed, but this confinement perhaps adds to her depression. She should have change, fresh air, gaiety—the most delightful remedies in the pharmacopoeia," Mr. Clump said, grinning and showing his handsome teeth. "Persuade her to rise, dear madam. Drag her from her couch and her low spirits, insist upon her taking little drives. They will restore the roses too to *your* cheeks, if I may so speak to Mrs. Bute Crawley."

"The sight of her horrid nephew casually in the Park, where I am told the wretch drives with the brazen partner of his crimes," Mrs. Bute said (letting the cat of selfishness out of the bag of secrecy), "would cause her such a shock that we should have to bring her back to bed again. She must not go out, Mr. Clump. She shall not go out as long as I remain to watch over her. And as for *my* health, what matters it? I give it cheerfully, sir. I sacrifice it at the altar of my duty."

"Upon my word, madam," Mr. Clump now said bluntly, "I won't answer for her life if she remains locked up in that dark room. She is so nervous that we may lose her any day, and if you wish Captain Crawley to be her heir, I

warn you frankly, madam, that you are doing your very best to serve him."

"Gracious mercy! Is her life in danger?" Mrs. Bute cried. "Why, why, Mr. Clump, did you not inform me sooner?"

The night before, Mr. Clump and Dr. Squills had had a consultation regarding Miss Crawley and her case.

"What a little harpy that woman from Hampshire is, Clump," Squills remarked, "that has seized upon old Tilly Crawley."

"What a fool Rawdon Crawley has been," Clump replied, "to go and marry a governess! There was something about the girl, too."

"Green eyes, fair skin, pretty figure, famous frontal development," Squills remarked. "There is something about her, and Crawley *was* a fool, Squills."

"A damn fool—always was," the apothecary replied.

"Of course the old girl will fling him over," said the physician, and after a pause added, "She'll cut up well, I suppose."

"Cut up," says Clump with a grin. "I wouldn't have her cut up for two hundred a year."

"That Hampshire woman will kill her in two months, Clump, my boy, if she stops about her," Dr. Squills said. "Old woman—full feeder—nervous subject—palpitation of the heart—pressure on the brain—apoplexy—off she goes. Get her up, Clump, get her out, or I wouldn't give many weeks' purchase for your two hundred a year." And it was acting upon this hint that the worthy apothecary spoke with so much candor to Mrs. Bute Crawley.

Having the old lady under her hand, in bed, with nobody near, Mrs. Bute had made more than one assault upon her to induce her to alter her will. But Miss Crawley's usual terrors regarding death increased greatly when such dismal propositions were made to her, and Mrs. Bute saw that she must get her patient into cheerful spirits and health before she could hope to attain the pious object which she had in view. Whither to take her was the next puzzle. "The only place where she is not likely to meet those odious Rawdons is at church, and that won't amuse her," Mrs. Bute justly felt. "We must go and visit our beautiful suburbs of London," she then thought. "I hear they are the most picturesque in the world." And so she had a sudden interest for Hampstead and Hornsey, and found that Dulwich had great charms for her, and getting her victim into her carriage, drove her to those rustic spots, beguiling the little journeys with conversations about Rawdon and his wife, and telling every story to the old lady which could add to her indignation against this pair of reprobates.

Perhaps Mrs. Bute pulled the string unnecessarily tight. For though she worked up Miss Crawley to a proper dislike for her disobedient nephew, the invalid had a great hatred and secret terror of her victimizer, and panted to escape from her. After a brief space, she rebelled against Highgate and Hornsey utterly. She would go into the Park. Mrs. Bute knew they would meet the abominable Rawdon there, and she was right. One day in the Ring, Rawdon's stanhope came in sight, Rebecca was seated by him. In the enemy's equipage Miss Crawley occupied her usual place, with Mrs. Bute on her left, the poodle and Miss Briggs on the back seat. It was a nervous moment, and Rebecca's

heart beat quick as she recognized the carriage, and as the two vehicles crossed each other in a line she clasped her hands and looked toward the spinster with a face of agonized attachment and devotion. Rawdon himself trembled, and his face grew purple behind his dyed mustachios. Only old Briggs was moved in the other carriage, and cast her great eyes nervously toward her old friends. Miss Crawley's bonnet was resolutely turned toward the Serpentine. Mrs. Bute happened to be in ecstasies with the poodle, and was calling him a little darling and a sweet little zoggy and a pretty pet. The carriages moved on, each in his line.

"Done, by Jove," Rawdon said to his wife.

"Try once more, Rawdon," Rebecca answered. "Could not you lock your wheels into theirs, dearest?"

Rawdon had not the heart for that maneuver. When the carriages met again, he stood up in his stanhope, he raised his hand ready to doff his hat, he looked with all his eyes. But this time Miss Crawley's face was not turned away. She and Mrs. Bute looked him full in the face and cut their nephew pitilessly. He sank back in his seat with an oath, and striking out of the Ring, dashed away desperately homeward.

It was a gallant and decided triumph for Mrs. Bute. But she felt the danger of many such meetings as she saw the evident nervousness of Miss Crawley, and she determined that it was most necessary for her dear friend's health that they should leave town for a while, and recommended Brighton very strongly.

CHAPTER XIX

Without knowing how, Captain William Dobbin found himself the great promoter, arranger, and manager of the match between George Osborne and Amelia. But for him it never would have taken place. He could not but confess as much to himself, and smiled rather bitterly as he thought that he, of all men in the world, should be the person upon whom the care of this marriage had fallen. But though indeed the conducting of this negotiation was about as painful a task as could be set to him, yet when he had a duty to perform, Captain Dobbin was accustomed to go through it without many words or much hesitation, and having made up his mind completely that if Miss Sedley was balked of her husband she would die of the disappointment, he was determined to use all his best endeavors to keep her alive.

I forbear to enter into minute particulars of the interview between George and Amelia when the former was brought back to the feet (or should we venture to say the arms?) of his young mistress by the intervention of his friend, honest William. A much harder heart than George's would have melted at the sight of that sweet face so sadly ravaged by grief and despair, and at the simple, tender accents in which she told her little brokenhearted story. But as she did not faint when her mother, trembling, brought Osborne to her, and as she only gave relief to her overcharged grief by laying her head on her lover's shoulder

and there weeping for a while the most tender, copious, and refreshing tears, old Mrs. Sedley too, greatly relieved, thought it was best to leave the young persons to themselves, and so quitted Emmy crying over George's hand and kissing it humbly, as if he were her supreme chief and master, and as if she were quite a guilty and unworthy person, needing every favor and grace from him.

This prostration and sweet, unrepining obedience exquisitely touched and flattered George Osborne. He saw a slave before him in that simple, yielding, faithful creature, and his soul within him thrilled secretly somehow at the knowledge of his power. He would be generous-minded, sultan as he was, and raise up this kneeling Esther and make a queen of her. Besides, her sadness and beauty touched him as much as her submission, and so he cheered her, and raised her up, and forgave her, so to speak. All her hopes and feelings, which were dying and withering, this her sun having been removed from her, bloomed again and at once, its light being restored. You would scarcely have recognized the beaming little face upon Amelia's pillow that night as the one that was laid there the night before, so wan, so lifeless, so careless of all roundabout. The honest Irish maidservant, delighted with the change, asked leave to kiss the face that had grown all of a sudden so rosy. Amelia put her arms round the girl's neck and kissed her with all her heart, like a child. She was little more. She had that night a sweet, refreshing sleep—and what a spring of inexpressible happiness as she woke in the morning sunshine!

"He will be here again today," Amelia thought. "He is the greatest and best of men." And the fact is that George thought he was one of the generousest creatures alive, and that he was making a tremendous sacrifice in marrying this young creature.

While she and Osborne were having their delightful tête-à-tête abovestairs, old Mrs. Sedley and Captain Dobbin were conversing below upon the state of the affairs, and the chances and future arrangements of the young people. Mrs. Sedley, having brought the two lovers together and left them embracing each other with all their might, like a true woman was of opinion that no power on earth would induce Mr. Sedley to consent to the match between his daughter and the son of a man who had so shamefully, wickedly, and monstrously treated him. And she told a long story about happier days and their earlier splendors, when Osborne lived in a very humble way in the New Road, and his wife was *too glad* to receive some of Jos's little baby things, with which Mrs. Sedley accommodated her at the birth of one of Osborne's own children. The fiendish ingratitude of that man, she was sure, had broken Mr. S's heart, and as for a marriage, he would never, never, never, *never* consent.

"They must run away together, ma'am," Dobbin said, laughing, "and follow the example of Captain Rawdon Crawley and Miss Emmy's friend the little governess." Was it possible? Well, she never! Mrs. Sedley was all excitement about this news. What an escape Jos had had! And she described the already well-known love passages between Rebecca and the Collector of Boggley Wollah.

It was not, however, Mr. Sedley's wrath which Dobbin feared so much as

that of the other parent concerned, and he owned that he had a very considerable doubt and anxiety respecting the behavior of the black-browed old tyrant of a Russia merchant in Russell Square. "He has forbidden the match peremptorily," Dobbin thought. He knew what a savage, determined man Osborne was, and how he stuck by his word. "The only chance George has of reconcilement," argued his friend, "is by distinguishing himself in the coming campaign. If he dies, they both go together. If he fails in distinction—what then? He has some money from his mother, I have heard—enough to purchase his majority—or he must sell out and go and dig in Canada, or rough it in a cottage in the country."

It was these weighty considerations which made him think, too, that the marriage should take place as quickly as possible. Was he anxious himself, I wonder, to have it over—as people, when death has occurred, like to press forward the funeral, or when a parting is resolved upon, hasten it? It is certain that Mr. Dobbin, having taken the matter in hand, was most extraordinarily eager in the conduct of it. He urged on George the necessity of immediate action, he showed the chances of reconciliation with his father which a favorable mention of his name in the *Gazette* must bring about. If need were he would go himself and brave both the fathers in the business. At all events, he besought George to go through with it before the orders came, which everybody expected, for the departure of the regiment from England on foreign service.

Bent upon these hymeneal projects, and with the applause and consent of Mrs. Sedley, who did not care to break the matter personally to her husband, Mr. Dobbin went to seek John Sedley at his house of call in the City, the Tapioca Coffeehouse, where since his own offices were shut up and fate had overtaken him, the poor broken-down old gentleman used to betake himself daily and write letters and receive them and tie them up into mysterious bundles, several of which he carried in the flaps of his coat.

Dobbin found the once florid, jovial, and prosperous John Sedley. His coat that used to be so glossy and trim was white at the seams, and the buttons showed the copper. His face had fallen in and was unshaven, his frill and neckcloth hung limp under his bagging waistcoat. When he used to treat the boys in old days at a coffeehouse, he would shout and laugh louder than anybody there, and have all the waiters skipping round him. It was quite painful to see how humble and civil he was to John of the Tapioca, a blear-eyed old attendant in dingy stockings and cracked pumps whose business it was to serve glasses of wafers and bumpers of ink in pewter and slices of paper to the frequenters of this dreary house of entertainment, where nothing else seemed to be consumed. As for William Dobbin, whom he had tipped repeatedly in his youth, and who had been the old gentleman's butt on a thousand occasions, old Sedley gave his hand to him in a very hesitating, humble manner now, and called him "sir." A feeling of shame and remorse took possession of William Dobbin as the broken old man so received and addressed him, as if he himself had been somehow guilty of the misfortunes which had brought Sedley so low.

"I am very glad to see you, Captain Dobbin, sir," says he, after a skulking

look or two at his visitor. "How is the worthy Alderman, and my lady, your excellent mother, sir?" He looked round at the waiter as he said "my lady," as much as to say, "Hark ye, John, I have friends still, and persons of rank and reputation, too." "Are you come to do anything in my way, sir? My young friends Dale and Spiggot do all my business for me now, until my new offices are ready; for I'm only here temporarily, you know, Captain. What can we do for you, sir? Will you like to take anything?"

Dobbin, with a great deal of hesitation and stuttering, protested that he was not in the least hungry or thirsty, that he had no business to transact, that he only came to ask if Mr. Sedley was well and to shake hands with an old friend.

"I've a very kind letter here from your father, sir, and beg my respectful compliments to him. You're a military man. I ask you, Bill Dobbin, could any man ever have speculated upon the return of that Corsican scoundrel from Elba? When the allied sovereigns were here last year, and we gave 'em that dinner in the City, sir, and we saw the Temple of Concord, and the fireworks, and the Chinese bridge in St. James's Park, could any sensible man suppose that peace wasn't really concluded, after we'd actually sung *Te Deum* for it, sir? I ask you, William, could I suppose that the Emperor of Austria was a damned traitor—a traitor, and nothing more? I don't mince words—a double-faced, infernal traitor and schemer, who meant to have his son-in-law back all along. And I say the escape of Boney from Elba was a damned imposition and plot, sir, in which half the powers of Europe were concerned, to bring the funds down and to ruin this country. That's why I'm here, William. That's why my name's in the *Gazette*. Why, sir? Because I trusted the Emperor of Russia and the Prince Regent. Look here. Look at my papers. Look what the funds were on the first of March—what the French fives were when I bought for the account. And what they're at now. There was collusion, sir, or that villain never would have escaped. Where was the English Commissioner who allowed him to get away? He ought to be shot, sir—brought to a court-martial and shot, by Jove!"

"We're going to hunt Boney out, sir," Dobbin said, rather alarmed at the fury of the old man, the veins of whose forehead began to swell, and who sat drumming his papers with his clenched fist. "We are going to hunt him out, sir—the Duke's in Belgium already, and we expect marching orders every day."

"Give him no quarter. Brink back the villain's head, sir. Shoot the coward down, sir!" Sedley roared. "I'd enlist myself, by ——, but I'm a broken old man—ruined by that damned scoundrel, and by a parcel of swindling thieves in this country whom I made, sir, and who are rolling in their carriages now," he added, with a break in his voice.

Dobbin was not a little affected by the sight of this once kind old friend crazed almost with misfortune and raving with senile anger.

"Yes," he continued, "there are some vipers that you warm and they sting you afterward. There are some beggars that you put on horseback and they are the first to ride you down. You know whom I mean, William Dobbin, my boy. I mean a purse-proud villain in Russell Square, whom I knew without a shilling, and whom I pray and hope to see a beggar, as he was when I befriended him."

"I have heard something of this, sir, from my friend George," Dobbin said, anxious to come to his point. "The quarrel between you and his father has cut him up a great deal, sir. Indeed, I'm the bearer of a message from him."

"Oh, *that's* your errand, is it?" cried the old man, jumping up. "What! Perhaps he condoles with me, does he? Very kind of him, the stiff-backed prig with his dandified airs and West End swagger. He's hankering about my house, is he, still? If my son had the courage of a man, he'd shoot him. He's as big a villain as his father. I won't have his name mentioned in my house. I curse the day that ever I let him into it, and I'd rather see my daughter dead at my feet than married to him."

"His father's harshness is not George's fault, sir. Your daughter's love for him is as much your doing as his. Who are you that you are to play with two young people's affections and break their hearts at your will?"

"Recollect it's not his father that breaks the match off!" old Sedley cried out. "It's I that forbid it. That family and mine are separated forever, I'm fallen low, but not so low as that—no, no. And so you may tell the whole race—son, and father, and sisters, and all."

"It's my belief, sir, that you have not the power or the right to separate those two," Dobbin answered in a low voice, "and that if you don't give your daughter your consent, it will be her duty to marry without it. There's no reason she should die or live miserably because you are wrongheaded. To my thinking she's just as much married as if the banns had been read in all the churches in London. And what better answer can there be to Osborne's charges against you, as charges there are, than that his son claims to enter your family and marry your daughter!"

A light of something like satisfaction seemed to break over old Sedley as this point was put to him, but he still persisted that with his consent the marriage between Amelia and George should never take place.

"We must do it without," Dobbin said, smiling, and told Mr. Sedley, as he had told Mrs. Sedley on the day before, the story of Rebecca's elopement with Captain Crawley. It evidently amused the old gentleman. "You're terrible fellows, you captains," said he, tying up his papers, and his face wore something like a smile upon it. The idea of hitting his enemy Osborne such a blow soothed, perhaps, the old gentleman, and their colloquy presently ending, he and Dobbin parted pretty good friends.

"My sisters say she has diamonds as big as pigeons' eggs," George said, laughing. "How they must set off her complexion! A perfect illumination it must be when her jewels are on her neck. Her jet-black hair is as curly as Sambo's. I dare say she wore a nose ring when she went to Court, and with a plume of feathers in her topknot she would look a perfect Belle Sauvage."

George, in conversation with Amelia, was rallying the appearance of a young lady of whom his father and sisters had lately made the acquaintance, and who was an object of vast respect to the Russell Square family. She was reported to have I don't know how many plantations in the West Indies, a deal of money in the funds, and three stars to her name in the East India stockholders'

list. She had a mansion in Surrey and a house in Portland Place. The name of the rich West India heiress had been mentioned with applause in the *Morning Post*. Mrs. Haggistoun, Colonel Haggistoun's widow, her relative, "chaperoned" her, and kept her house. She was just from school, where she had completed her education, and George and his sisters had met her at an evening party, and the girls had made the most cordial advances to her, which the heiress had received with great good humor. An orphan in her position—with her money—so interesting! the Misses Osborne said. They were full of their new friend when they returned from the ball to Miss Wirt, their companion. They had made arrangements for continually meeting, and had the carriage and drove to see her the very next day. Mrs. Haggistoun struck the dear, unsophisticated girls as rather haughty, and too much inclined to talk about her relations. But Rhoda was everything they could wish—the frankest, kindest, most agreeable creature—wanting a little polish, but so good-natured. The girls Christian-named each other at once.

"You should have seen her dress for Court, Emmy," Osborne cried, laughing. "She came to my sisters to show it off before she was presented in state by my Lady Binkie, the Haggistouns' kinswoman. She's related to everyone, that Haggistoun. Her diamonds blazed out like Vauxhall on the night we were there. (Do you remember Vauxhall, Emmy, and Jos singing to his dearest diddle-diddle-darling?) Diamonds and mahogany, my dear! Think what an advantageous contrast, and the white feathers in her hair—I mean in her wool. She had earrings like chandeliers—you might have lighted 'em up, by Jove—and a yellow satin train that streeled after her like the tail of a comet."

"How old is she?" asked Emmy, to whom George was rattling away regarding this dark paragon on the morning of their reunion—rattling away as no other man in the world surely could.

"Why the Black Princess, though she has only just left school, must be two or three and twenty. And you should see the hand she writes! Mrs. Colonel Haggistoun usually writes her letters, but in a moment of confidence she put pen to paper for my sisters. She spelled satin satting, and Saint James's, Saint Jams."

"Why, surely it must be Miss Swartz, the parlor boarder," Emmy said, remembering that good-natured young mulatto girl who had been so hysterically affected when Amelia left Miss Pinkerton's academy.

"The very name," George said. "Her father was a German Jew—a slaveowner, they say—connected with the Cannibal Islands in some way or other. He died last year, and Miss Pinkerton has finished her education. She can play two pieces on the piano, she knows three songs, she can write when Mrs. Haggistoun is by to spell for her, and Jane and Maria already have got to love her as a sister."

"I wish they would have loved me," said Emmy wistfully. "They were always very cold to me."

"My dear child, they would have loved you if you had had two hundred thousand pounds," George replied. "That is the way in which they have been brought up. Ours is a ready-money society. We live among bankers and City bigwigs, and be hanged to them, and every man as he talks to you is jingling

his guineas in his pocket. There is that jackass Fred Bullock is going to marry Maria—there's Goldmore, the East India director—there's Dipley, in the tallow trade—*our* trade," George said, with an uneasy laugh and a blush. "Curse the whole pack of money-grubbing vulgarians! I fall asleep at their great heavy dinners. I feel ashamed in my father's great stupid parties. I've been accustomed to live with gentlemen and men of the world and fashion, Emmy, not with a parcel of turtle-fed tradesmen. Dear little woman, you are the only person of our set who ever looked, or thought, or spoke like a lady. And you do it because you're an angel, and can't help it. Don't remonstrate. You *are* the only lady. Didn't Miss Crawley remark it, who has lived in the best company in Europe? And as for Crawley of the Life Guards, hang it, he's a fine fellow, and I like him for marrying the girl he had chosen."

Amelia admired Mr. Crawley very much too for this, and trusted Rebecca would be happy with him, and hoped (with a laugh) Jos would be consoled. And so the pair went on prattling as in quite early days. Amelia's confidence being perfectly restored to her, though she expressed a great deal of pretty jealousy about Miss Swartz and professed to be dreadfully frightened—like a hypocrite as she was—lest George should forget her for the heiress and her money and her estates in St. Kitt's. But the fact is she was a great deal too happy to have fears or doubts or misgivings of any sort, and having George at her side again, was not afraid of any heiress or beauty, or indeed of any sort of danger.

CHAPTER XX

Love may be felt for any young lady endowed with such qualities as Miss Swartz possessed, and a great dream of ambition entered into old Mr. Osborne's soul, which she was to realize. He encouraged, with the utmost enthusiasm and friendliness, his daughters' amiable attachment to the young heiress, and protested that it gave him the sincerest pleasure as a father to see the love of his girls so well disposed.

"You won't find," he would say to Miss Rhoda, "that splendor and rank to which you are accustomed at the West End, my dear miss, at our humble mansion in Russell Square. My daughters are plain, disinterested girls, but their hearts are in the right place, and they've conceived an attachment for you which does them honor—I say, which does them honor. I'm a plain, simple, humble British merchant—an honest one, as my respected friends Hulker & Bullock will vouch, who were the correspondents of your late lamented father. You'll find us a united, simple, happy, and I think I may say respected family—a plain table, a plain people, but a warm welcome, my dear Miss Rhoda—Rhoda, let me say, for my heart warms to you, it does really. I'm a frank man, and I like you. A glass of champagne! Hicks, champagne to Miss Swartz."

There is little doubt that old Osborne believed all he said, and that the girls were quite earnest in their protestations of affection for Miss Swartz. The major part of the Osborne family, who had not in fifteen years been able to

get up a hearty regard for Amelia Sedley, became as fond of Miss Swartz in the course of a single evening as the most romantic advocate of friendship at first sight could desire.

What a match for George she'd be (the sisters and Miss Wirt agreed), and how much better than that insignificant little Amelia! Such a dashing young fellow as he is, with his good looks, rank, and accomplishments, would be the very husband for her. Visions of halls in Portland Place, presentations at Court, and introductions to half the peerage filled the minds of the young ladies, who talked of nothing but George and his grand acquaintances to their beloved new friend.

On the first day when his father formally gave him the hint that he was to place his affections at Miss Swartz's feet, George temporized with the old gentleman. "You should have thought of the matter sooner, sir," he said. "It can't be done now, when we're expecting every day to go on foreign service. Wait till my return, if I do return."

The father's reply was founded upon the information which he had got in the City—that the West End chaps would infallibly catch hold of the heiress if any delay took place, that if he didn't marry Miss S, he might at least have an engagement in writing, to come into effect when he returned to England, and that a man who could get ten thousand a year by staying at home was a fool to risk his life abroad.

"So that you would have me shown up as a coward, sir, and our name dishonored for the sake of Miss Swartz's money," George interposed.

This remark staggered the old gentleman, but as he had to reply to it, and as his mind was nevertheless made up, he said, "You will dine here tomorrow, sir, and every day that Miss Swartz comes, you will be here to pay your respects to her. If you want for money, call upon Mr. Chopper."

The dark object of the conspiracy into which the chiefs of the Osborne family had entered was quite ignorant of all their plans regarding her (which, strange to say, her friend and chaperon did not divulge), and, taking all the young ladies' flattery for genuine sentiment and being, as we have before had occasion to show, of a very warm and impetuous nature, responded to their affection with quite a tropical ardor. And if the truth may be told, I dare say that she too had some selfish attraction in the Russell Square house, and, in a word, thought George Osborne a very nice young man. His whiskers had made an impression upon her on the very first night she beheld them at the ball, and, as we know, she was not the first woman who had been charmed by them. George had an air at once swaggering and melancholy, languid and fierce. He looked like a man who had passions, secrets, and private harrowing griefs and adventures. His voice was rich and deep. He would say it was a warm evening or ask his partner to take an ice with a tone as sad and confidential as if he were breaking her mother's death to her, or preluding a declaration of love. He trampled over all the young bucks of his father's circle, and was the hero among those third-rate men. Some few sneered at him and hated him. Some, like Dobbin, fanatically admired him. And his whiskers had begun to do their work, and to curl themselves round the affections of Miss Swartz.

Whenever there was a chance of meeting him in Russell Square, that simple and good-natured young woman was quite in a flurry to see her dear Misses Osborne. She went to great expenses in new gowns and bracelets and bonnets, and in prodigious feathers. She adorned her person with her utmost skill to please the conqueror, and exhibited all her simple accomplishments to win his favor. The girls would ask her, with the greatest gravity, for a little music and she would sing her three songs and play her two pieces as often as ever they asked, and with an always increasing pleasure to herself. During these delectable entertainments, Miss Wirt and the chaperon sat by and conned over the peerage, and talked about the nobility.

The day after George had his hint from his father, and a short time before the hour of dinner, he was lolling upon a sofa in the drawing-room in a very becoming and perfectly natural attitude of melancholy. He had been, at his father's request, to Mr. Chopper in the City (the old gentleman, though he gave great sums to his son, would never specify any fixed allowance for him, and rewarded him only as he was in the humor). He had then been to pass three hours with Amelia, his dear little Amelia, at Fulham; and he came home to find his sisters spread in starched muslin in the drawing-room, the dowagers cackling in the background, and honest Swartz in her favorite amber-colored satin, with turquoise bracelets, countless rings, flowers, feathers, and all sorts of tags and gimcracks, about as elegantly decorated as a she chimney sweep on Mayday.

The girls, after vain attempts to engage him in conversation, talked about fashions and the last drawing-room until he was perfectly sick of their chatter. He contrasted their behavior with little Emmy's—their shrill voices with her tender, ringing tones, their attitudes and their elbows and their starch with her humble, soft movements and modest graces. Poor Swartz was seated in a place where Emmy had been accustomed to sit. Her bejeweled hands lay sprawling in her amber-satin lap. Her tags and earrings twinkled and her big eyes rolled about. She was doing nothing with perfect contentment, and thinking herself charming. Anything so becoming as the satin the sisters had never seen.

"Damme," George said to a confidential friend, "she looked like a China doll which has nothing to do all day but to grin and wag its head. By Jove, Will, it was all I could do to prevent myself from throwing the sofa cushion at her." He restrained that exhibition of sentiment, however.

The sisters began to play the "Battle of Prague." "Stop that damn thing," George howled out in a fury from the sofa. "It makes me mad. *You* play us something, Miss Swartz, do. Sing something—anything but the 'Battle of Prague.'"

"Shall I sing 'Blue-Eyed Mary,' or the air from the Cabinet?" Miss Swartz asked.

"That sweet thing from the Cabinet," the sisters said.

"We've had that," replied the misanthrope on the sofa.

"I can sing 'Fluvy du Tajy,'" Swartz said, in a meek voice, "if I had the words." It was the last of the worthy young woman's collection.

"Oh, *'Fleuve du Tage,'* " Miss Maria cried. "We have the song," and went off to fetch the book in which it was.

Now it happened that this song, then in the height of the fashion, had been given to the young ladies by a young friend of theirs whose name was on the title, and Miss Swartz, having concluded the ditty with George's applause (for he remembered that it was a favorite of Amelia's), was hoping for an encore perhaps and fiddling with the leaves of the music when her eye fell upon the title, and she saw "Amelia Sedley" written in the corner.

"Lor!" cried Miss Swartz, spinning swiftly round on the music stool, "is it *my* Amelia? Amelia that was at Miss P's at Hammersmith? I know it is. It's her, and—tell me about her—where is she?"

"Don't mention her," Miss Maria Osborne said hastily. "Her family has disgraced itself. Her father cheated Papa, and as for her, she is never to be mentioned *here*." This was Miss Maria's return for George's rudeness about the "Battle of Prague."

"Are you a friend of Amelia's?" George said, bouncing up. "God bless you for it, Miss Swartz. Don't believe what the girls say. *She's* not to blame at any rate. She's the best—"

"You know you're not to speak about her, George!" cried Jane. "Papa forbids it."

"Who's to prevent me?" George cried out. "I *will* speak of her. I say she's the best, the kindest, the gentlest, the sweetest girl in England, and that bankrupt or no, my sisters are not fit to hold candles to her. If you like her, go and see her, Miss Swartz. She wants friends now, and I say God bless everybody who befriends her. Anybody who speaks kindly of her is my friend, anybody who speaks against her is my enemy. Thank you, Miss Swartz." And he went up and wrung her hand.

"George! George!" one of the sisters cried imploringly.

"I say," George said fiercely, "I think everybody who loves Amelia Sed—" He stopped. Old Osborne was in the room with a face livid with rage and eyes like hot coals.

Though George had stopped in his sentence, yet, his blood being up, he was not to be cowed by all the generations of Osborne. Rallying instantly, he replied to the bullying look of his father with another so indicative of resolution and defiance that the elder man quailed in his turn, and looked away. He felt that the tussle was coming. "Mrs. Haggistoun, let me take you down to dinner," he said. "Give your arm to Miss Swartz, George," and they marched.

"Miss Swartz, I love Amelia, and we've been engaged almost all our lives," Osborne said to his partner. And during all the dinner George rattled on with a volubility which surprised himself and made his father doubly nervous for the fight which was to take place as soon as the ladies were gone.

The difference between the pair was that while the father was violent and a bully, the son had thrice the nerve and courage of the parent, and could not merely make an attack, but resist it. Finding that the moment was now come when the contest between him and his father was to be decided, he took his dinner with perfect coolness and appetite before the engagement began. Old

Osborne, on the contrary, was nervous, and drank much. He floundered in his conversation with the ladies, George's coolness only rendering him more angry. It made him half-mad to see the calm way in which George, flapping his napkin and with a swaggering bow, opened the door for the ladies to leave the room, and filling himself a glass of wine, smacked it and looked his father full in the face, as if to say, "Gentlemen of the Guard, fire first." The old man also took a supply of ammunition, but his decanter clinked against the glass as he tried to fill it.

After giving a great heave, and with a purple, choking face, he then began. "How dare you, sir, mention that person's name before Miss Swartz today, in my drawing-room? I ask you, sir, how dare you do it?"

"Stop, sir," says George. "Don't say dare, sir. Dare isn't a word to be used to a captain in the British Army."

"I shall say what I like to my son, sir. I can cut him off with a shilling if I like. I can make him a beggar if I like. I *will* say what I like," the elder said.

"I'm a gentleman, though I *am* your son, sir," George answered haughtily. "Any communications which you have to make to me, or any orders which you may please to give, I beg may be couched in that kind of language which I am accustomed to hear."

Whenever the lad assumed his haughty manner, it always created either great awe or great irritation in the parent. Old Osborne stood in secret terror of his son as a better gentleman than himself.

"My father didn't give me the education you have had, nor the advantages you have had, nor the money you have had. If I had kept the company *some* folks have had through *my means*, perhaps my son wouldn't have any reason to brag, sir, of his *superiority* and *West End airs*." These words were uttered in the elder Osborne's most sarcastic tones. "But it wasn't considered the part of a gentleman, in *my* time, for a man to insult his father. If I'd done any such thing, mine would have kicked me downstairs, sir."

"I never insulted you, sir. I said I begged you to remember your son was a gentleman as well as yourself. I know very well that you give me plenty of money," said George. "You tell it me often enough, sir. There's no fear of my forgetting it."

"I wish you'd remember other things as well, sir," the sire answered. "I wish you'd remember that in this house—so long as you choose to *honor* it with your *company*, Captain—I'm the master, and that name, and that—that—that you—that—I say—"

"That what, sir?" George asked, with scarcely a sneer, filling another glass of claret.

"———!" burst out his father with a screaming oath—"That the name of those Sedleys never be mentioned here, sir—not one of the whole damned lot of 'em, sir."

"It wasn't I, sir, that introduced Miss Sedley's name. It was my sisters who spoke ill of her to Miss Swartz, and, by Jove, I'll defend her wherever I go. Nobody shall speak lightly of that name in my presence. Our family has done

her quite enough injury already, I think, and may leave off reviling her now she's down. I'll shoot any man but you who says a word against her."

"Go on, sir, go on," the old gentleman said, his eyes starting out of his head.

"Go on about what, sir? About the way in which we've treated that angel of a girl? Who told me to love her? It was your doing. I might have chosen elsewhere, and looked higher perhaps than your society, but I obeyed you. And now that her heart's mine you give me orders to fling it away, and punish her, kill her perhaps, for the faults of other people. It's a shame, by heavens," said George, working himself up into passion and enthusiasm as he proceeded, "to play at fast and loose with a young girl's affections—and with such an angel as that—one so superior to the people among whom she lived that she might have excited envy, only she was so good and gentle that it's a wonder anybody dared to hate her. If I desert her, sir, do you suppose she forgets me?"

"I ain't going to have any of this damned sentimental nonsense and humbug here, sir!" the father cried out. "There shall be no beggar marriages in my family. If you choose to fling away eight thousand a year which you may have for the asking, you may do it, but, by Jove, you take your pack and walk out of this house, sir. Will you do as I tell you, once for all, sir, or will you not?"

"Marry that mulatto woman?" George said, pulling up his shirt collars. "I don't like the color, sir. Ask the black that sweeps opposite Fleet Market, sir. *I'm* not going to marry a Hottentot Venus."

Mr. Osborne pulled frantically at the cord by which he was accustomed to summon the butler when he wanted wine and, almost black in the face, ordered that functionary to call a coach for Captain Osborne.

"I've done it," said George, coming into the Slaughters' an hour afterward, looking very pale.

"What, my boy?" says Dobbin.

George told what had passed between his father and himself.

"I'll marry her tomorrow," he said with an oath. "I love her more every day, Dobbin."

CHAPTER XXI

Enemies the most obstinate and courageous can't hold out against starvation, so the elder Osborne felt himself pretty easy about his adversary in the encounter we have just described, and as soon as George's supplies fell short, confidently expected his unconditional submission. It was unlucky, to be sure, that the lad should have secured a stock of provisions on the very day when the first encounter took place; but this relief was only temporary, old Osborne thought, and would but delay George's surrender. No communication passed between father and son for some days. The former was sulky at this silence, but not disquieted; for, as he said, he knew where he could put the screw upon George, and only waited the result of that operation. He told the sisters the upshot of the dispute between them, but ordered them to take no notice of the matter and welcome George on his return as if nothing had happened. His

cover was laid as usual every day, and perhaps the old gentleman rather anxiously expected him, but he never came. Someone inquired at the Slaughters' regarding him, where it was said that he and his friend Captain Dobbin had left town.

One gusty, raw day at the end of April—the rain whipping the pavement of that ancient street where the old Slaughters' Coffeehouse was once situated—George Osborne came into the coffeeroom looking very haggard and pale, although dressed rather smartly in a blue coat and brass buttons and a neat buff waistcoat of the fashion of those days. Here was his friend Captain Dobbin, in blue and brass too, having abandoned the military frock and French-gray trousers which were the usual coverings of his lanky person.

Dobbin had been in the coffeeroom for an hour or more. He had tried all the papers, but could not read them. He had looked at the clock many scores of times, and at the street, where the rain was pattering down and the people as they clinked by in pattens left long reflections on the shining stone. He tattooed at the table, he bit his nails most completely and nearly to the quick, he balanced the teaspoon dexterously on the milk jug, and in fact showed those signs of disquietude and practiced those desperate attempts at amusement which men are accustomed to employ when very anxious, and expectant, and perturbed in mind.

Some of his comrades, gentlemen who used the room, joked him about the splendor of his costume and his agitation of manner. One asked him if he was going to be married. Dobbin laughed, and said he would send his acquaintance a piece of cake when that event took place. At length Captain Osborne made his appearance, very smartly dressed but very pale and agitated, as we have said. He wiped his pale face with a large yellow bandana pocket handkerchief that was prodigiously scented. He shook hands with Dobbin, looked at the clock, and told John, the waiter, to bring him some curaçao. Of this cordial he swallowed off a couple of glasses with nervous eagerness. His friend asked with some interest about his health.

"Couldn't get a wink of sleep till daylight, Dob," said he. "Infernal headache and fever. Got up at nine and went down to the Hummums for a bath. I say, Dob, I feel just as I did on the morning I went out with Rocket at Quebec."

"So do I," William responded. "I was a deuced deal more nervous than you were that morning. You made a famous breakfast. Eat something now."

"You're a good old fellow, Will. I'll drink your health, old boy, and farewell to——"

"No, no, two glasses are enough," Dobbin interrupted him. "Here, take away the liqueurs, John. Have some cayenne pepper with your fowl. Make haste, though, for it is time we were there."

It was about half an hour from twelve when this brief meeting and colloquy took place between the two captains. A coach, into which Captain Osborne's servant put his master's desk and dressing case, had been waiting for some time; and into this the two gentlemen hurried under an umbrella, and the valet mounted on the box, cursing the rain and the dampness of the coachman, who was steaming beside him. "We shall find a better trap than this at the church

door," says he. "That's a comfort." And the carriage drove on, taking the road down Piccadilly and down by Brompton to a certain chapel near the Fulham Road there. A chariot was in waiting with four horses, likewise a coach of the kind called glass coaches. Only a very few idlers were collected, on account of the dismal rain.

"Hang it!" said George. "I said only a pair."

"My master would have four," said Joseph Sedley's servant, who was in waiting, and he and Mr. Osborne's man agreed as they followed George and William into the church that it was a "reg'lar shabby turnhout, and with scarce so much as a breakfast or a wedding favor."

"Here you are," said our old friend Jos Sedley, coming forward. "You're five minutes late, George, my boy. What a day, eh? Demme, it's like the commencement of the rainy season in Bengal. But you'll find my carriage is watertight. Come along, my mother and Emmy are in the vestry."

Jos Sedley was splendid. He was fatter than ever. His shirt collars were higher, his face was redder, his shirt frill flaunted gorgeously out of his variegated waistcoat. Varnished boots were not invented yet, but the Hessians on his beautiful legs shone so that they must have been the identical pair in which the gentleman in the old picture used to shave himself, and on his light-green coat there bloomed a fine wedding favor like a great white spreading magnolia.

In a word, George had thrown the great cast. He was going to be married. Hence his pallor and nervousness—his sleepless night and agitation in the morning.

The bride was dressed in a brown-silk pelisse and wore a straw bonnet with a pink ribbon. Over the bonnet she had a veil of white Chantilly lace, a gift from Mr. Joseph Sedley, her brother. Captain Dobbin himself had asked leave to present her with a gold chain and watch, which she sported on this occasion, and her mother gave her her diamond brooch—almost the only trinket which was left to the old lady. As the service went on, Mrs. Sedley sat and whimpered a great deal in a pew, consoled by the Irish maidservant and Mr. Clapp from the lodgings. Old Sedley would not be present. Jos acted for his father, giving away the bride, while Captain Dobbin stepped up as groomsman to his friend George.

There was nobody in the church besides the officiating persons and the small marriage party and their attendants. The two valets sat aloof superciliously. The rain came rattling down on the windows. In the intervals of the service you heard it and the sobbing of old Mrs. Sedley in the pew. The parson's tones echoed sadly through the empty walls. Osborne's "I will" was sounded in very deep bass. Emmy's response came fluttering up to her lips from her heart, but was scarcely heard by anybody except Captain Dobbin.

When the service was completed, Jos Sedley came forward and kissed his sister, the bride, for the first time for many months—George's look of gloom had gone, and he seemed quite proud and radiant. "It's your turn, William," says he, putting his hand fondly upon Dobbin's shoulder, and Dobbin went up and touched Amelia on the cheek.

Then they went into the vestry and signed the register. "God bless you, old

Dobbin," George said, grasping him by the hand with something very like moisture glistening in his eyes. William replied only by nodding his head. His heart was too full to say much.

"Write directly, and come down as soon as you can, you know," Osborne said. After Mrs. Sedley had taken a hysterical adieu of her daughter, the pair went off to the carriage. "Get out of the way, you little devils," George cried to a small crowd of damp urchins that were hanging about the chapel door. The rain drove into the bride's and bridegroom's faces as they passed to the chariot. The postilion's favors draggled on their dripping jackets. The few children made a dismal cheer as the carriage, splashing mud, drove away.

William Dobbin stood in the church porch looking at it, a queer figure. The small crew of spectators jeered him. He was not thinking about them or their laughter.

"Come home and have some tiffin, Dobbin," a voice cried behind him as a pudgy hand was laid on his shoulder and the honest fellow's reverie was interrupted. But the Captain had no heart to go afeasting with Jos Sedley. He put the weeping old lady and her attendants into the carriage along with Jos, and left them without any further words passing. This carriage too drove away, and the urchins gave another sarcastical cheer.

"Here, you little beggars," Dobbin said, giving some sixpences among them, and then went off by himself through the rain. It was all over. They were married, and happy, he prayed God. Never since he was a boy had he felt so miserable and so lonely. He longed with a heartsick yearning for the first few days to be over, that he might see her again.

Some ten days after the above ceremony, three young men of our acquaintance were enjoying that beautiful prospect of bow windows on the one side and blue sea on the other which Brighton affords to the traveler.

"Shall we go and look at some horses that Snaffler's just brought from Lewes Fair?" Crawley said.

"Suppose we go and have some jellies at Dutton's," said the rogue Jos, willing to kill two birds with one stone. "Devilish fine gal at Dutton's."

"Suppose we go and see the *Lightning* come in, it's just about time," George said. This advice prevailing over the stables and the jelly, they turned toward the coach office to witness the *Lightning's* arrival.

As they passed, they met the carriage—Jos Sedley's open carriage, with its magnificent armorial bearings, that splendid conveyance in which he used to drive about at Cheltenham, majestic and solitary, with his arms folded and his hat cocked, or, more happy, with ladies by his side. Two were in the carriage now: one a little person with light hair and dressed in the height of the fashion; the other in a brown-silk pelisse and a straw bonnet with pink ribbons, with a rosy, round, happy face that did you good to behold. She checked the carriage as it neared the three gentlemen, after which exercise of authority she looked rather nervous, and then began to blush most absurdly.

"We have had a delightful drive, George," she said, "and—and we're so glad to come back. And, Joseph, don't let him be late."

"Don't be leading our husbands into mischief, Mr. Sedley, you wicked,

wicked man, you," Rebecca said, shaking at Jos a pretty little finger covered with the neatest French kid glove. "No billiards, no smoking, no naughtiness!"

"My dear Mrs. Crawley—ah now! upon my honor!" was all Jos could ejaculate by way of reply.

Our young bride and bridegroom had chosen Brighton as the place where they would pass the first few days after their marriage, and having engaged apartments at the Ship Inn, enjoyed themselves there in great comfort and quietude until Jos presently joined them. Nor was he the only companion they found there. As they were coming into the hotel from a seaside walk one afternoon, on whom should they light but Rebecca and her husband. The recognition was immediate. Rebecca flew into the arms of her dearest friend. Crawley and Osborne shook hands together cordially enough, and Becky in the course of a very few hours found means to make the latter forget that little unpleasant passage of words which had happened between them. "Do you remember the last time we met at Miss Crawley's, when I was so rude to you, dear Captain Osborne? I thought you seemed careless about dear Amelia. It was that made me angry, and so pert, and so unkind, and so ungrateful. Do forgive me!" Rebecca said, and she held out her hand with so frank and winning a grace that Osborne could not but take it.

These two young couples had plenty of tales to relate to each other. The marriages of either were discussed, and their prospects in life canvassed with the greatest frankness and interest on both sides. George's marriage was to be made known to his father by his friend Captain Dobbin, and young Osborne trembled rather for the result of that communication. Miss Crawley, on whom all Rawdon's hopes depended, still held out. Unable to make an entry into her house in Park Lane, her affectionate nephew and niece had followed her to Brighton, where they had emissaries continually planted at her door.

"I wish you could see some of Rawdon's friends who are always about *our* door," Rebecca said, laughing. "Did you ever see a dun, my dear, or a bailiff and his man? Two of the abominable wretches watched all last week at the greengrocer's opposite, and we could not get away until Sunday. If Aunty does not relent, what *shall* we do?"

Rawdon, with roars of laughter, related a dozen amusing anecdotes of his duns and Rebecca's adroit treatment of them. He vowed with a great oath that there was no woman in Europe who could talk a creditor over as she could. Almost immediately after their marriage, her practice had begun, and her husband found the immense value of such a wife. They had credit in plenty, but they had bills also in abundance, and labored under a scarcity of ready money. Rawdon and his wife had the very best apartments at the inn at Brighton. The landlord, as he brought in the first dish, bowed before them as to his greatest customers, and Rawdon abused the dinners and wine with an audacity which no grandee in the land could surpass. Long custom, a manly appearance, faultless boots and clothes, and a happy fierceness of manner will often help a man as much as a great balance at the banker's.

The two wedding parties met constantly in each other's apartments. After two or three nights the gentlemen of an evening had a little piquet as their

wives sat and chatted apart. This pastime, and the arrival of Jos Sedley, who made his appearance in his grand open carriage and who played a few games at billiards with Captain Crawley, replenished Rawdon's purse somewhat, and gave him the benefit of that ready money for which the greatest spirits are sometimes at a standstill.

So the three gentlemen walked down to see the *Lightning* coach come in. Punctual to the minute, the coach crowded inside and out, the guard blowing his accustomed tune on the horn, the *Lightning* came tearing down the street and pulled up at the coach office.

"Hullo! There's Old Dobbin," George cried, quite delighted to see his old friend perched on the roof, whose promised visit to Brighton had been delayed until now. "How are you, old fellow? Glad you're come down. Emmy'll be delighted to see you," Osborne said, shaking his comrade warmly by the hand as soon as his descent from the vehicle was effected. And then he added, in a lower and agitated voice: "What's the news? Have you been in Russell Square? What does the Governor say? Tell me everything."

Dobbin looked very pale and grave. "I've seen your father," said he. "How's Amelia—Mrs. George? I'll tell you all the news presently, but I've brought the great news of all, and that is——"

"Out with it, old fellow," George said.

"We're ordered to Belgium. All the army goes—Guards and all. Heavytop's got the gout, and is mad at not being able to move. O'Dowd goes in command, and we embark from Chatham next week."

This news of war could not but come with a shock upon our lovers, and caused all these gentlemen to look very serious.

CHAPTER XXII

While our friend George and his young wife were enjoying the first blushing days of the honeymoon at Brighton, honest William was left as George's plenipotentiary in London, to transact all the business part of the marriage. His duty it was to call upon old Sedley and his wife, and to keep the former in good humor; to draw Jos and his brother-in-law nearer together, so that Jos's position and dignity as Collector of Boggley Wollah might compensate for his father's loss of station and tend to reconcile old Osborne to the alliance; and finally, to communicate it to the latter in such a way as should least irritate the old gentleman.

Now before he faced the head of the Osborne house with the news which it was his duty to tell, Dobbin bethought him that it would be politic to make friends of the rest of the family, and if possible have the ladies on his side. "They can't be angry in their hearts," thought he. "No woman ever was really angry at a romantic marriage." So this Machiavellian captain of infantry cast about him for some happy means or stratagem by which he could gently and gradually bring the Misses Osborne to a knowledge of their brother's secret.

By a little inquiry regarding his mother's engagements, he was pretty soon able to find out by whom of her ladyship's friends parties were given at that season. And though he had that abhorrence of routs and evening parties which many sensible men, alas! entertain, he soon found one where the Misses Osborne were to be present. Making his appearance at the ball, where he danced a couple of sets with both of them and was prodigiously polite, he actually had the courage to ask Miss Osborne for a few minutes' conversation at an early hour the next day, when he had, he said, to communicate to her news of the very greatest interest.

What was it that made her start back and gaze upon him for a moment and then on the ground at her feet, and make as if she would faint on his arm had he not by opportunely treading on her toes brought the young lady back to self-control? Why was she so violently agitated at Dobbin's request? This can never be known. But when he came the next day, Maria was not in the drawing-room with her sister, and Miss Wirt went off for the purpose of fetching the latter, and the Captain and Miss Osborne were left together. They were both so silent that the ticktock of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia clock on the mantelpiece became quite rudely audible.

"What a nice party it was last night," Miss Osborne at length began, encouragingly, "and—and how you're improved in your dancing, Captain Dobbin. Surely somebody has taught you," she added, with amiable archness.

"You should see me dance a reel with Mrs. Major O'Dowd of Ours, and a jig —did you ever see a jig? But I think anybody could dance with *you*, Miss Osborne, who dance so well."

"Is the Major's lady young and beautiful, Captain?" the fair questioner continued. "Ah, what a terrible thing it must be to be a soldier's wife! I wonder they have any spirits to dance, and in these dreadful times of war, too! Oh, Captain Dobbin, I tremble sometimes when I think of our dearest George, and the dangers of the poor soldier. Are there many married officers of the —th, Captain Dobbin?"

"One of our young men is just married," Dobbin said, now coming to the point. "It was a very old attachment, and the young couple are as poor as church mice."

"Oh, how delightful! Oh, how romantic!" Miss Osborne cried as the Captain said "old attachment" and "poor." Her sympathy encouraged him.

"The finest young fellow in the regiment," he continued. "Not a braver or handsomer officer in the army, and such a charming wife! How you would like her! How you *will* like her when you know her, Miss Osborne." The young lady thought the actual moment had arrived, and that Dobbin's nervousness, which now came on and was visible in many twitchings of his face, in his manner of beating the ground with his great feet, in the rapid buttoning and unbuttoning of his frock coat, etc.—Miss Osborne, I say, thought that when he had given himself a little air, he would unbosom himself entirely, and prepared eagerly to listen. And the clock in the altar on which Iphigenia was situated beginning, after a preparatory convulsion, to toll twelve, the mere tolling

seemed as if it would last until one, so prolonged was the knell to the anxious spinster.

"But it's not about marriage that I came to speak—that is that marriage—that is—no, I mean—my dear Miss Osborne, it's about our dear friend George," Dobbin said.

"About George?" she said in a tone so discomfited that Maria and Miss Wirt laughed at the other side of the door, and even that abandoned wretch of a Dobbin felt inclined to smile himself. For he was not altogether unconscious of the state of affairs, George having often bantered him gracefully and said: "Hang it, Will, why don't you take old Jane? She'll have you if you ask her. I'll bet you five to two she will."

"Yes, about George, then," he continued. "There has been a difference between him and Mr. Osborne. And I regard him so much—for you know we have been like brothers—that I hope and pray the quarrel may be settled. We must go abroad, Miss Osborne. We may be ordered off at a day's warning. Who knows what may happen in the campaign? Don't be agitated, dear Miss Osborne—and those two at least should part friends."

"There has been no quarrel, Captain Dobbin, except a little usual scene with Papa," the lady said. "We are expecting George back daily. What Papa wanted was only for his good. He has but to come back and I'm sure all will be well, and dear Rhoda, who went away from here in sad, sad anger, I know will forgive him. Woman forgives but too readily, Captain."

"Such an angel as *you* I am sure would," Mr. Dobbin said, with atrocious astuteness. "And no man can pardon himself for giving a woman pain. What would you feel if a man were faithless to you?"

"I should perish—I should throw myself out of window—I should take poison—I should pine and die. I know I should," miss cried, who had nevertheless gone through one or two affairs of the heart without any idea of suicide.

"And there are others," Dobbin continued, "as true and as kindhearted as yourself. I'm not speaking about the West Indian heiress, Miss Osborne, but about a poor girl whom George once loved, and who was bred from her childhood to think of nobody but him. I've seen her in her poverty uncomplaining, brokenhearted, without a fault. It is of Miss Sedley I speak. Dear Miss Osborne, can your generous heart quarrel with your brother for being faithful to her? Could his own conscience ever forgive him if he deserted her? Be her friend—she always loved you—and—and I am come here charged by George to tell you that he holds his engagement to her as the most sacred duty he has, and to entreat *you* at least to be on his side."

When any strong emotion took possession of Mr. Dobbin, and after the first word or two of hesitation, he could speak with perfect fluency, and it was evident that his eloquence on this occasion made some impression upon the lady whom he addressed.

"Well," said she, "this is—most surprising—most painful—most extraordinary—what will Papa say?—that George should fling away such a superb establishment as was offered to him. But at any rate he has found a very brave champion in you, Captain Dobbin. It is of no use, however," she continued after a pause.

"I feel for poor Miss Sedley, most certainly—most sincerely, you know. We never thought the match a good one, though we were always very kind to her here—very. But Papa will never consent, I am sure. And a well-brought-up young woman, you know, with a well-regulated mind, must—George must give her up, dear Captain Dobbin, indeed he must."

"Ought a man to give up the woman he loved just when misfortune befell her?" Dobbin said, holding out his hand. "Dear Miss Osborne, is this the counsel I hear from *you?* My dear young lady, you must befriend her. He can't give her up. He must not give her up. Would a man, think you, give *you* up if you were poor?"

This adroit question touched the heart of Miss Jane Osborne not a little. "I don't know whether we poor girls ought to believe what you men say, Captain," she said. "There is that in woman's tenderness which induces her to believe too easily. I'm afraid you are cruel, cruel deceivers"—and Dobbin certainly thought he felt a pressure of the hand which Miss Osborne had extended to him.

He dropped it in some alarm. "Deceivers!" said he. "No, dear Miss Osborne, all men are not—your brother is not. George has loved Amelia Sedley ever since they were children; no wealth would make him marry any but her. Ought he to forsake her? Would you counsel him to do so?"

What could Miss Jane say to such a question, and with her own peculiar views? She could not answer it, so she parried it by saying, "Well, if you are not a deceiver, at least you are *very* romantic," and Captain William let this observation pass without challenge.

At length when, by the help of further polite speeches, he deemed that Miss Osborne was sufficiently prepared to receive the whole news, he poured it into her ear. "George could not give up Amelia—George was married to her"—and then he related the circumstances of the marriage as we know them already. And so, asking permission (readily granted) to see her again, and rightly conjecturing that the news he had brought would be told in the next five minutes to the other ladies, Captain Dobbin made his bow and took his leave.

He was scarcely out of the house when Miss Maria and Miss Wirt rushed in to Miss Osborne, and the whole wonderful secret was imparted to them by that lady. To do them justice, neither of the sisters was very much displeased. There is something about a runaway match with which few ladies can be seriously angry, and Amelia rather rose in their estimation from the spirit which she had displayed in consenting to the union. As they debated the story and prattled about it and wondered what Papa would do and say, came a loud knock, as of an avenging thunderclap, at the door, which made these conspirators start. It must be Papa, they thought. But it was not he. It was only Mr. Frederick Bullock, who had come from the City, according to appointment, to conduct the ladies to a flower show.

This gentleman, as may be imagined, was not kept long in ignorance of the secret. But his face when he heard it showed an amazement which was very different to that look of sentimental wonder which the countenances of the sisters wore. Mr. Bullock was a man of the world, and a junior partner of a

wealthy firm. He knew what money was, and the value of it; and a delightful throb of expectation lighted up his little eyes and caused him to smile on his Maria as he thought that by this piece of folly of Mr. George's she might be worth thirty thousand pounds more than he had ever hoped to get with her.

"Gad, Jane," said he, surveying even the elder sister with some interest, "Eels will be sorry he cried off. You may be a fifty-thousand-pounder yet."

The sisters had never thought of the money question up to that moment, but Fred Bullock bantered them with graceful gaiety about it during their forenoon's excursion, and they had risen not a little in their own esteem by the time when, the morning amusement over, they drove back to dinner.

CHAPTER XXIII

So, having prepared the sisters, Dobbin hastened away to the City to perform the rest and more difficult part of the task which he had undertaken. The idea of facing old Osborne rendered him not a little nervous, and more than once he thought of leaving the young ladies to communicate the secret, which, as he was aware, they could not long retain. But he had promised to report to George upon the manner in which the elder Osborne bore the intelligence, so going into the City to the paternal countinghouse in Thames Street, he dispatched thence a note to Mr. Osborne begging for a half-hour's conversation relative to the affairs of his son George. Dobbin's messenger returned from Mr. Osborne's house of business with the compliments of the latter, who would be very happy to see the Captain immediately, and away accordingly Dobbin went to confront him.

The Captain, with a half-guilty secret to confess and with the prospect of a painful and stormy interview before him, entered Mr. Osborne's offices with a most dismal countenance and abashed gait, and passing through the outer room where Mr. Chopper presided, was greeted by that functionary from his desk with a waggish air which further discomfited him. Mr. Chopper winked and nodded and pointed his pen toward his patron's door, and said, "You'll find the Governor all right," with the most provoking good humor.

Osborne rose too, and shook him heartily by the hand, and said, "How do, my dear boy?" with a cordiality that made poor George's ambassador feel doubly guilty. His hand lay as if dead in the old gentleman's grasp. He felt that he, Dobbin, was more or less the cause of all that had happened. It was he had brought back George to Amelia, it was he had applauded, encouraged, transacted almost the marriage which he was come to reveal to George's father. And the latter was receiving him with smiles of welcome, patting him on the shoulder, and calling him "Dobbin, my dear boy." The envoy had indeed good reason to hang his head.

Osborne fully believed that Dobbin had come to announce his son's surrender. Mr. Chopper and his principal were talking over the matter between George and his father at the very moment when Dobbin's messenger arrived.

Osborne from his chair regarded Dobbin seated blank and silent opposite to him. "What a bumpkin he is for a captain in the army," old Osborne thought. "I wonder George hasn't taught him better manners."

At last Dobbin summoned courage to begin. "Sir," said he, "I've brought you some very grave news. I have been at the Horse Guards this morning, and there's no doubt that our regiment will be ordered abroad and on its way to Belgium before the week is over. And you know, sir, that we shan't be home again before a tussle which may be fatal to many of us."

Osborne looked grave. "My s—— The regiment will do its duty, sir, I dare say," he said.

"The French are very strong, sir," Dobbin went on. "The Russians and Austrians will be a long time before they can bring their troops down. We shall have the first of the fight, sir, and depend on it Boney will take care that it shall be a hard one."

"What are you driving at, Dobbin?" his interlocutor said, uneasy and with a scowl. "I suppose no Briton's afraid of any damned Frenchman, hey?"

"I only mean that before we go, and considering the great and certain risk that hangs over every one of us—if there are any differences between you and George—it would be as well, sir, that—that you should shake hands, wouldn't it? Should anything happen to him, I think you would never forgive yourself if you hadn't parted in charity."

As he said this, poor William Dobbin blushed crimson, and felt and owned that he himself was a traitor. But for him, perhaps, this severance need never have taken place. Why had not George's marriage been delayed? What call was there to press it on so eagerly? He felt that George would have parted from Amelia at any rate without a mortal pang. Amelia, too, *might* have recovered the shock of losing him. It was his counsel had brought about this marriage, and all that was to ensue from it. And why was it? Because he loved her so much that he could not bear to see her unhappy, or because his own sufferings of suspense were so unendurable that he was glad to crush them at once—as we hasten a funeral after a death, or when a separation from those we love is imminent, cannot rest until the parting be over.

"You are a good fellow, William," said Mr. Osborne in a softened voice, "and me and George shouldn't part in anger, that is true. Look here. I've done for him as much as any father ever did. He's had three times as much money from me as I warrant your father ever gave you. But I don't brag about that. How I've toiled for him, and worked and employed my talents and energy, *I* won't say. Ask Chopper. Ask himself. Ask the City of London. Well, I propose to him such a marriage as any nobleman in the land might be proud of—the only thing in life I ever asked him—and he refuses me. Am *I* wrong? Is the quarrel of *my* making? What do I seek but his good, for which I've been toiling like a convict ever since he was born? Nobody can say there's anything selfish in *me*. Let him come back. I say, here's my hand. I say, forget and forgive. As for marrying now, it's out of the question. Let him and Miss S make it up and make out the marriage afterward, when he comes back a colonel; for he shall be a colonel, by God he shall, if money can do it. I'm glad you've brought him

round. I know it's you, Dobbin. You've took him out of many a scrape before. Let him come. *I* shan't be hard. Come along and dine in Russell Square today—both of you. The old shop, the old hour. You'll find a neck of venison, and no questions asked."

This praise and confidence smote Dobbin's heart very keenly. Every moment the colloquy continued in this tone he felt more and more guilty. "Sir," said he, "I fear you deceive yourself. I am sure you do. George is much too high-minded a man ever to marry for money. A threat on your part that you would disinherit him in case of disobedience would only be followed by resistance on his."

"Why, hang it, man, you don't call offering him eight or ten thousand a year threatening him?" Mr. Osborne said, with still provoking good humor. "Gad, if Miss S will have me, I'm her man. I ain't particular about a shade or so of tawny." And the old gentleman gave his knowing grin and coarse laugh.

"You forget, sir, previous engagements into which Captain Osborne had entered," the ambassador said gravely.

"What engagements? What the devil do you mean? You don't mean," Mr. Osborne continued, gathering wrath and astonishment as the thought now first came upon him—"you don't mean that he's such a damn fool as to be still hankering after that swindling old bankrupt's daughter? You've not come here for to make me suppose that he wants to marry *her?* Marry *her*, that *is* a good one. My son and heir marry a beggar's girl out of a gutter! Damn him, if he does, let him buy a broom and sweep a crossing. She was always dangling and ogling after him, I recollect now, and I've no doubt she was put on by her old sharper of a father."

"Mr. Sedley was your very good friend, sir," Dobbin interposed, almost pleased at finding himself growing angry. "Time was you called him better names than rogue and swindler. The match was of your making. George had no right to play fast and loose——"

"Fast and loose!" howled out old Osborne. "Fast and loose! Why, hang me, those are the very words my gentleman used himself when he gave himself airs, last Thursday was a fortnight, and talked about the British Army to his father who made him. What, it's you who have been a setting of him up—is it? and my service to you, *Captain.* It's you who want to introduce beggars into my family. Thank you for nothing, Captain. Marry *her* indeed—he, he! Why should he? I warrant you she'd go to him fast enough without."

"Sir," said Dobbin, starting up in undisguised anger, "no man shall abuse that lady in my hearing, and you least of all."

"Oh, you're going to call me out, are you? Stop, let me ring the bell for pistols for two. Mr. George sent you here to insult his father, did he?" Osborne said, pulling at the bell cord.

"Mr. Osborne," said Dobbin, with a faltering voice, "it's you who are insulting the best creature in the world. You had best spare her, sir, for she's your son's wife."

And with this, feeling that he could say no more, Dobbin went away, Osborne sinking back in his chair and looking wildly after him. A clerk came

in, obedient to the bell, and the Captain was scarcely out of the court where Mr. Osborne's offices were when Mr. Chopper, the chief clerk, came rushing hatless after him.

"For God's sake, what is it?" Mr. Chopper said, catching the Captain by the skirt. "The Governor's in a fit. What has Mr. George been doing?"

"He married Miss Sedley five days ago," Dobbin replied. "I was his groomsman, Mr. Chopper, and you must stand his friend."

The old clerk shook his head. "If that's your news, Captain, it's bad. The Governor will never forgive him."

Dobbin begged Chopper to report progress to him at the hotel where he was stopping, and walked off moodily westward, greatly perturbed as to the past and the future.

When the Russell Square family came to dinner that evening, they found the father of the house seated in his usual place, but with that air of gloom on his face which, whenever it appeared there, kept the whole circle silent. The ladies, and Mr. Bullock, who dined with them, felt that the news had been communicated to Mr. Osborne. His dark looks affected Mr. Bullock so far as to render him still and quiet, but he was unusually bland and attentive to Miss Maria, by whom he sat, and to her sister presiding at the head of the table.

Miss Wirt, by consequence, was alone on her side of the board, a gap being left between her and Miss Jane Osborne. Now this was George's place when he dined at home and his cover, as we said, was laid for him in expectation of that truant's return. Nothing occurred during dinnertime except smiling Mr. Frederick's flagging, confidential whispers, and the clinking of plate and china, to interrupt the silence of the repast. The servants went about stealthily doing their duty. Mutes at funerals could not look more glum than the domestics of Mr. Osborne. The neck of venison of which he had invited Dobbin to partake was carved by him in perfect silence, but his own share went away almost untasted, though he drank much and the butler assiduously filled his glass.

At last, just at the end of the dinner, his eyes, which had been staring at everybody in turn, fixed themselves for a while upon the plate laid for George. He pointed to it presently with his left hand. His daughters looked at him and did not comprehend, or choose to comprehend, the signal, nor did the servants at first understand it.

"Take that plate away," at last he said, getting up with an oath, and with this, pushing his chair back, he walked into his own room.

Behind Mr. Osborne's dining-room was the usual apartment which went in his house by the name of the study, and was sacred to the master of the house. Hither Mr. Osborne would retire of a Sunday forenoon when not minded to go to church, and here pass the morning in his crimson-leather chair, reading the paper. A couple of glazed bookcases were here, containing standard works in stout gilt bindings. From year's end to year's end he never took one of these volumes from the shelf, but there was no member of the family that would dare for his life to touch one of the books. To this study old Osborne retired then, greatly to the relief of the small party whom he left. When the servants

had withdrawn, they began to talk for a while volubly but very low. Then they went upstairs quietly, Mr. Bullock accompanying them stealthily on his creaking shoes. He had no heart to sit alone drinking wine, and so close to the terrible old gentleman in the study hard at hand.

An hour at least after dark, the butler, not having received any summons, ventured to tap at his door and take him in wax candles and tea. The master of the house sat in his chair pretending to read the paper, and when the servant, placing the lights and refreshments on the table by him, retired, Mr. Osborne got up and locked the door after him. This time there was no mistaking the matter. All the household knew that some great catastrophe was going to happen which was likely direly to affect Master George.

In the large shining mahogany escritoire Mr. Osborne had a drawer especially devoted to his son's affairs and papers. Here he kept all the documents relating to him ever since he had been a boy. Here were his prize copybooks and drawing books, all bearing George's hand and that of the master. Here were his first letters in large roundhand, sending his love to Papa and Mamma, and conveying his petitions for a cake. His dear Godpapa Sedley was more than once mentioned in them. Curses quivered on old Osborne's livid lips, and horrid hatred and disappointment writhed in his heart as looking through some of these papers he came on that name. They were all marked and docketed, and tied with red tape. It was—"From Georgy, requesting 5*s*., April 23d, 18—; answered, April 25th"—or "Georgy about a pony, October 13th"—and so forth. In another packet were "Dr. S's accounts"—"G's tailor's bills and outfits, drafts on me by G. Osborne, jun.," etc.—his letters from the West Indies—his agent's letters, and the newspapers containing his commissions. Here was a whip he had when a boy, and in a paper a locket containing his hair, which his mother used to wear.

Having examined these papers, and pondered over this one and the other, in that bitterest of all helpless woe with which miserable men think of happy past times, George's father took the whole of the documents out of the drawer in which he had kept them so long and locked them into a writing box, which he tied and sealed with his seal. Then he opened the bookcase and took down the great red Bible—a pompous book, seldom looked at, and shining all over with gold. There was a frontispiece to the volume representing Abraham sacrificing Isaac. Here, according to custom, Osborne had recorded on the flyleaf and in his large clerklike hand the dates of his marriage and his wife's death, and the births and Christian names of his children. Jane came first, then George Sedley Osborne, then Maria Frances, and the days of the christening of each. Taking a pen, he carefully obliterated George's name from the page and when the leaf was quite dry, restored the volume to the place from which he had moved it. Then he took a document out of another drawer, where his own private papers were kept, and having read it, crumpled it up and lighted it at one of the candles and saw it burn entirely away in the grate. It was his will, which being burned, he sat down and wrote off a letter, and rang for his servant, whom he charged to deliver it in the morning. It was morning already.

As he went up to bed the whole house was alight with the sunshine, and the birds were singing among the fresh green leaves in Russell Square.

Anxious to keep all Mr. Osborne's family and dependents in good humor, and to make as many friends as possible for George in his hour of adversity, William Dobbin, who knew the effect which good dinners and good wines have upon the soul of man, wrote off immediately, on his return to his inn, the most hospitable of invitations to Thomas Chopper, Esquire, begging that gentleman to dine with him at the Slaughters' next day. The note reached Mr. Chopper before he left the City, and the instant reply was, that "Mr. Chopper presents his respectful compliments, and will have the honor and pleasure of waiting on Captain D."

Mr. Osborne's countenance when he arrived in the City at his usual time struck those dependents who were accustomed, for good reasons, to watch its expression as peculiarly ghastly and worn. At twelve o'clock Mr. Higgs (of the firm of Higgs & Blatherwick, solicitors, Bedford Row) called by appointment and was ushered into the Governor's private room, and closeted there for more than an hour. At about one Mr. Chopper received a note brought by Captain Dobbin's man, and containing an enclosure for Mr. Osborne, which the clerk went in and delivered. A short time afterward Mr. Chopper and Mr. Birch, the next clerk, were summoned and requested to witness a paper. "I've been making a new will," Mr. Osborne said, to which these gentlemen appended their names accordingly. No conversation passed. Mr. Higgs looked exceedingly grave as he came into the outer rooms, but there were not any explanations. It was remarked that Mr. Osborne was particularly quiet and gentle all day, to the surprise of those who had augured ill from his darkling demeanor. He called no man names that day, and was not heard to swear once. He left business early, and before going away summoned his chief clerk once more, and having given him general instructions, asked him, after some seeming hesitation and reluctance to speak, if he knew whether Captain Dobbin was in town.

Chopper said he believed he was. Indeed, both of them knew the fact perfectly. Osborne took a letter directed to that officer, and giving it to the clerk, requested the latter to deliver it into Dobbin's own hands immediately.

The Colonel of the —th regiment, in which Messieurs Dobbin and Osborne had companies, was an old General who had made his first campaign under Wolfe at Quebec, and was long since quite too old and feeble for command; but he took some interest in the regiment of which he was the nominal head and made certain of his young officers welcome at his table, a kind of hospitality which I believe is not now common among his brethren. Captain Dobbin was an especial favorite of this old General. Dobbin was versed in the literature of his profession, and could talk about the great Frederick and the Empress Queen and their wars almost as well as the General himself, who was indifferent to the triumphs of the present day, and whose heart was with the tacticians of fifty years back. This officer sent a summons to Dobbin to come and breakfast with him on the morning when Mr. Osborne altered his will and

Mr. Chopper put on his best shirt frill, and then informed his young favorite, a couple of days in advance, of that which they were all expecting—a marching order to go to Belgium. The order for the regiment to hold itself in readiness would leave the Horse Guards in a day or two, and as transports were in plenty, they would get their route before the week was over. Recruits had come in during the stay of the regiment at Chatham, and the old General hoped that the regiment which had helped to beat Montcalm in Canada, and to rout Mr. Washington on Long Island, would prove itself worthy of its historical reputation on the oft-trodden battlegrounds of the Low Countries.

This news made Dobbin grave, and he thought of our friends at Brighton, and then he was ashamed of himself that Amelia was always the first thing in his thoughts (always before anybody—before father and mother, sisters, and duty—always at waking and sleeping indeed, and all day long), and returning to his hotel, he sent off a brief note to Mr. Osborne acquainting him with the information which he had received, and which might tend further, he hoped, to bring about a reconciliation with George.

Dobbin was quite justified in repeating the General's information to any officers of the regiment whom he should see in the course of his peregrinations. Accordingly he imparted it to Ensign Stubble, whom he met at the agent's, and who—such was his military ardor—went off instantly to purchase a new sword at the accouterment-maker's. Here this young fellow, who, though only seventeen years of age and about sixty-five inches high, with a constitution naturally rickety and much impaired by premature brandy and water, had an undoubted courage and a lion's heart, poised, tried, bent, and balanced a weapon such as he thought would do execution among Frenchmen.

Mr. Stubble, as may be supposed from his size and slenderness, was of the Light Bobs. Ensign Spooney, on the contrary, was a tall youth and belonged to (Captain Dobbin's) the Grenadier Company, and he tried on a new bear-skin cap, under which he looked savage beyond his years. Then these two lads went off to the Slaughters', and having ordered a famous dinner, sat down and wrote off letters to the kind, anxious parents at home—letters full of love and heartiness, and pluck and bad spelling. Ah! there were many anxious hearts beating through England at that time, and mothers' prayers and tears flowing in many homesteads.

The two ensigns, the Captain, and Mr. Chopper dined together in the same box. Chopper brought the letter from Mr. Osborne, in which the latter briefly presented his compliments to Captain Dobbin and requested him to forward the enclosed to Captain George Osborne. Chopper knew nothing further. He described Mr. Osborne's appearance, it is true, and his interview with his lawyer, wondered how the Governor had sworn at nobody, and—especially as the wine circled round—abounded in speculations and conjectures. But these grew more vague with every glass, and at length became perfectly unintelligible. At a late hour Captain Dobbin put his guest into a hackney coach.

CHAPTER XXIV

Conducted to the ladies at the Ship Inn, Dobbin assumed a jovial and rattling manner which proved that this young officer was becoming a more consummate hypocrite every day of his life. He was trying to hide his own private feelings, first upon seeing Mrs. George Osborne in her new condition, and secondly to mask the apprehensions he entertained as to the effect which the dismal news brought down by him would certainly have upon her.

"It is my opinion, George," he said, "that the French Emperor will be upon us, horse and foot, before three weeks are over, and will give the Duke such a dance as shall make the Peninsula appear mere child's play. But you need not say that to Mrs. Osborne, you know. There mayn't be any fighting on our side after all, and our business in Belgium may turn out to be a mere military occupation. Many persons think so, and Brussels is full of fine people and ladies of fashion." So it was agreed to represent the duty of the British Army in Belgium in this harmless light to Amelia.

This plot being arranged, the hypocritical Dobbin saluted Mrs. George Osborne quite gaily, tried to pay her one or two compliments relative to her new position as a bride, and then fell to talking about Brighton, and the sea air, and the gaieties of the place, and the beauties of the road, and the merits of the *Lightning* coach and horses—all in a manner quite incomprehensible to Amelia and very amusing to Rebecca, who was watching the Captain, as indeed she watched everyone near whom she came.

Little Amelia, it must be owned, had rather a mean opinion of her husband's friend, Captain Dobbin. He lisped—he was very plain and homely-looking and exceedingly awkward and ungainly. She liked him for his attachment to her husband, and she thought George was most generous and kind in extending his friendship to his brother officer. George had mimicked Dobbin's lisp and queer manners many times to her, though, to do him justice, he always spoke most highly of his friend's good qualities. In her little day of triumph, and not knowing him intimately as yet, she made light of honest William—and he knew her opinions of him quite well, and acquiesced in them very humbly. A time came when she knew him better and changed her notions regarding him, but that was distant as yet.

As for Rebecca, Captain Dobbin had not been two hours in the ladies' company before she understood his secret perfectly. She did not like him, and feared him privately, nor was he very much prepossessed in her favor. He was so honest that her arts and cajoleries did not affect him, and he shrank from her with instinctive repulsion. And as she was by no means so far superior to her sex as to be above jealousy, she disliked him the more for his adoration of Amelia. Nevertheless she was very respectful and cordial in her manner toward him. A friend to the Osbornes! A friend to her dearest benefactors! She vowed she should always love him sincerely. She remembered him quite well on the Vauxhall night, as she told Amelia archly, and she made a little

fun of him when the two ladies went to dress for dinner. Rawdon Crawley paid scarcely any attention to Dobbin, looking upon him as a good-natured nincompoop and underbred City man. Jos patronized him with much dignity.

When George and Dobbin were alone in the latter's room, to which George had followed him, Dobbin took from his desk the letter which he had been charged by Mr. Osborne to deliver to his son. "It's not in my father's handwriting," said George, looking rather alarmed. Nor was it; the letter was from Mr. Osborne's lawyer, and to the following effect:

Bedford Row, May 7, 1815

Sir: I am commissioned by Mr. Osborne to inform you that he abides by the determination which he before expressed to you, and that in consequence of the marriage which you have been pleased to contract, he ceases to consider you henceforth as a member of his family. This determination is final and irrevocable.

Although the moneys expended upon you in your minority, and the bills which you have drawn upon him so unsparingly of late years, far exceed in amount the sum to which you are entitled in your own right (being the third part of the fortune of your mother, the late Mrs. Osborne, and which reverted to you at her decease, and to Miss Jane Osborne and Miss Maria Frances Osborne); yet I am instructed by Mr. Osborne to say that he waives all claim upon your estate, and that the sum of £2,000, 4 per cent annuities, at the value of the day (being your one-third share of the sum of £6,000), shall be paid over to yourself or your agents upon your receipt for the same, by

Your obedient servt., S. Higgs

P. S.—Mr. Osborne desires me to say, once for all, that he declines to receive any messages, letters, or communications from you on this or any other subject.

"A pretty way you have managed the affair," said George, looking savagely at William Dobbin. "Look there, Dobbin," and he flung over to the latter his parent's letter. "A beggar, by Jove, and all in consequence of my damned sentimentality. Why couldn't we have waited? A ball might have done for me in the course of the war, and may still, and how will Emmy be bettered by being left a beggar's widow? It was all your doing. You were never easy until you had got me married and ruined. What the deuce am I to do with two thousand pounds? Such a sum won't last two years. I've lost a hundred and forty to Crawley at cards and billiards since I've been down here. A pretty manager of a man's matters *you* are, forsooth."

"There's no denying that the position is a hard one," Dobbin replied, after reading over the letter with a blank countenance, "and as you say, it is partly of my making. There are some men who wouldn't mind changing with you," he added with a bitter smile. "How many captains in the regiment have two thousand pounds to the fore, think you? You must live on your pay till your father relents, and if you die, you leave your wife a hundred a year."

"Do you suppose a man of my habits can live on his pay and a hundred a year?" George cried out in great anger. "You must be a fool to talk so, Dobbin. How the deuce am I to keep up my position in the world upon such a pitiful pittance? I can't change my habits. I *must* have my comforts. *I* wasn't brought up on porridge like MacWhirter, or on potatoes like old O'Dowd. Do you expect my wife to take in soldiers' washing, or ride after the regiment in a baggage wagon?"

"Well, well," said Dobbin, still good-naturedly, "we'll get her a better conveyance. But try and remember that you are only a dethroned prince now, George, my boy, and be quiet while the tempest lasts. It won't be for long. Let your name be mentioned in the *Gazette* and I'll engage the old father relents toward you."

"Mentioned in the *Gazette!*" George answered. "And in what part of it? Among the killed and wounded returns, and at the top of the list, very likely."

"Psha! It will be time enough to cry out when we are hurt," Dobbin said. "And if anything happens, you know, George, I have got a little, and I am not a marrying man, and I shall not forget my godson in my will," he added, with a smile. Whereupon the dispute ended—as many scores of such conversations between Osborne and his friend had concluded previously—by the former declaring there was no possibility of being angry with Dobbin long, and forgiving him very generously after abusing him without cause.

"I say, Becky," cried Rawdon Crawley out of his dressing room to his lady, who was attiring herself for dinner in her own chamber.

"What?" said Becky's shrill voice. She was looking over her shoulder in the glass. She had put on the neatest and freshest white frock imaginable, and with bare shoulders and a little necklace, and a light-blue sash, she looked the image of youthful innocence and girlish happiness.

"I say, what'll Mrs. O do when O goes out with the regiment?" Crawley said, coming into the room performing a duet on his head with two huge hairbrushes, and looking out from under his hair with admiration on his pretty little wife.

"I suppose she'll cry her eyes out," Becky answered. "She has been whimpering half a dozen times at the very notion of it already to me."

"*You* don't care, I suppose?" Rawdon said, half-angry at his wife's want of feeling.

"You wretch! Don't you know that I intend to go with you?" Becky replied. "Besides, you're different. You go as General Tufto's aide-de-camp. *We* don't belong to the line," Mrs. Crawley said, throwing up her head with an air that so enchanted her husband that he stooped down and kissed it.

"Rawdon dear—don't you think—you'd better get that—money from Cupid, before he goes?" Becky continued, fixing on a killing bow. She called George Osborne, Cupid. She had flattered him about his good looks a score of times already. She watched over him kindly at écarté of a night when he would drop in to Rawdon's quarters for a half-hour before bedtime.

She had often called him a horrid dissipated wretch and threatened to tell

Emmy of his wicked ways and naughty, extravagant habits. She brought his cigar and lighted it for him—she knew the effect of that maneuver, having practiced it in former days upon Rawdon Crawley. He thought her gay, brisk, arch, distinguée, delightful. In their little drives and dinners, Becky of course quite outshone poor Emmy, who remained very mute and timid while Mrs. Crawley and her husband rattled away together and Captain Crawley (and Jos after he joined the young married people) gobbled in silence.

Emmy's mind somehow misgave her about her friend. Rebecca's wit, spirits, and accomplishments troubled her with a rueful disquiet. They were only a week married, and here was George already suffering ennui and eager for others' society! She trembled for the future. "How shall I be a companion for him," she thought—"so clever and so brilliant, and I such a humble, foolish creature? How noble it was of him to marry me—to give up everything and stoop down to me! I ought to have refused him, only I had not the heart. I ought to have stopped at home and taken care of poor Papa." And her neglect of her parents was now remembered for the first time, and caused her to blush with humiliation. "Oh," thought she, "I have been very wicked and selfish—selfish in forgetting them in their sorrows, selfish in forcing George to marry me. I know I'm not worthy of him—I know he would have been happy without me—and yet—I tried, I tried to give him up."

It is hard when before seven days of marriage are over such thoughts and confessions as these force themselves on a little bride's mind. But so it was, and the night before Dobbin came to join these young people—on a fine, brilliant moonlight night of May, so warm and balmy that the windows were flung open to the balcony from which George and Mrs. Crawley were gazing upon the calm ocean spread shining before them, while Rawdon and Jos were engaged at backgammon within—Amelia, couched in a great chair quite neglected, and watching both these parties, felt a despair and remorse such as were bitter companions for that tender, lonely soul. Scarce a week was past and it was come to this! The future, had she regarded it, offered a dismal prospect; but Emmy was too shy, so to speak, to look to that and embark alone on that wide sea, and unfit to navigate it without a guide and protector.

"Gad, what a fine night, and how bright the moon is!" George said, with a puff of his cigar which went soaring up skyward.

"How delicious they smell in the open air! I adore them. Who'd think the moon was two hundred and thirty-six thousand eight hundred and forty-seven miles off?" Becky added, gazing at that orb with a smile. "Isn't it clever of me to remember that? Pooh! We learned it all at Miss Pinkerton's! How calm the sea is, and how clear everything! I declare I can almost see the coast of France!" And her bright green eyes streamed out and shot into the night as if they *could* see through it.

"Do you know what I intend to do one morning?" she said. "I find I can swim beautifully, and some day when my Aunt Crawley's companion—old Briggs, you know—you remember her—that hook-nosed woman with the long wisps of hair—when Briggs goes out to bathe, I intend to dive under her awning and insist on a reconciliation in the water. Isn't that a stratagem?"

George burst out laughing at the idea of this aquatic meeting. "What's the row there, you two?" Rawdon shouted out, rattling the box. Amelia was making a fool of herself in an absurd, hysterical manner, and retired to her own room to whimper in private.

Our history is destined in this chapter to go backward and forward in a very irresolute manner seemingly, and having conducted our story to tomorrow presently, we shall immediately again have occasion to step back to yesterday, so that the whole of the tale may get a hearing. We have only now advanced in time so far beyond Chapter XXI as to have got our various characters up into their dressing rooms before the dinner which took place as usual on the day of Dobbin's arrival.

George was too humane or too much occupied with the tie of his neckcloth to convey at once all the news to Amelia which his comrade had brought with him from London. He came into her room, however, holding the attorney's letter in his hand, and with so solemn and important an air that his wife, always ingeniously on the watch for calamity, thought the worst about to befall, and running up to her husband, besought her dearest George to tell her everything—he was ordered abroad, there would be a battle next week, she knew there would.

Dearest George parried the question about foreign service, and with a melancholy shake of the head said: "No, Emmy, it isn't that. It's not myself I care about, it's you. I have had bad news from my father. He refuses any communication with me—he has flung us off, and leaves us to poverty. *I* can rough it well enough, but you, my dear, how will you bear it? Read here." And he handed her over the letter.

Amelia, with a look of tender alarm in her eyes, listened to her noble hero as he uttered the above generous sentiments, and sitting down on the bed, read the letter which George gave her with such a pompous, martyrlike air. Her face cleared up as she read the document, however. The idea of sharing poverty and privation in company with the beloved object is far from being disagreeable to a warmhearted woman. The notion was actually pleasant to little Amelia. Then, as usual, she was ashamed of herself for feeling happy at such an indecorous moment, and checked her pleasure, saying demurely, "Oh, George, how your poor heart must bleed at the idea of being separated from your papa!"

"It does," said George, with an agonized countenance.

"But he can't be angry with you long," she continued. "Nobody could, I'm sure. He must forgive you, my dearest, kindest husband. Oh, I shall never forgive myself if he does not!"

"What vexes me, my poor Emmy, is not *my* misfortune, but yours," George said. "I don't care for a little poverty, and I think, without vanity, I've talents enough to make my own way."

"That you have," interposed his wife, who thought that war should cease and her husband should be made a general instantly.

"Yes, I shall make my way as well as another," Osborne went on, "but you, my dear girl, how can I bear your being deprived of the comforts and station

in society which my wife had a right to expect? My dearest girl in barracks, the wife of a soldier in a marching regiment, subject to all sorts of annoyance and privation! It makes me miserable."

Emmy, quite at ease, as this was her husband's only cause of disquiet, took his hand, and with a radiant face and smile began to warble that stanza from the favorite song of "Wapping Old Stairs," in which the heroine, after rebuking her Tom for inattention, promises "his trousers to mend, and his grog too to make" if he will be constant and kind and not forsake her. "Besides," she said, after a pause during which she looked as pretty and happy as any young woman need, "isn't two thousand pounds an immense deal of money, George?"

George laughed at her naïveté, and finally they went down to dinner, Amelia clinging to George's arm still warbling the tune of "Wapping Old Stairs" and more pleased and light of mind than she had been for some days past.

Thus the repast, which at length came off, instead of being dismal was an exceedingly brisk and merry one. The excitement of the campaign counteracted in George's mind the depression occasioned by the disinheriting letter. Dobbin still kept up his character of rattle. He amused the company with accounts of the army in Belgium, where nothing but fêtes and gaiety and fashion were going on. Then, having a particular end in view, this dexterous Captain proceeded to describe Mrs. Major O'Dowd packing her own and her Major's wardrobe, and how his best epaulets had been stowed into a tea canister while her own famous yellow turban, with the bird of paradise wrapped in brown paper, was locked up in the Major's tin cocked-hat case, and wondered what effect it would have at the French King's Court at Ghent, or the great military balls at Brussels.

"Ghent! Brussels!" cried out Amelia with a sudden shock and start. "Is the regiment ordered away, George—is it ordered away?" A look of terror came over the sweet, smiling face, and she clung to George as by an instinct.

"Don't be afraid, dear," he said good-naturedly. "It is but a twelve hours' passage. It won't hurt you. You shall go too, Emmy."

"*I* intend to go," said Becky. "I'm on the staff. General Tufto is a great flirt of mine. Isn't he, Rawdon?"

Rawdon laughed out with his usual roar. William Dobbin flushed up quite red. "She can't go," he said. "Think of the——of the danger," he was going to add, but had not all his conversation during dinnertime tended to prove there was none? He became very confused and silent.

"I must and will go," Amelia cried with the greatest spirit, and George, applauding her resolution, patted her under the chin and asked all the persons present if they ever saw such a termagant of a wife, and agreed that the lady should bear him company. "We'll have Mrs. O'Dowd to chaperon you," he said. What cared she so long as her husband was near her? Thus somehow the bitterness of a parting was juggled away. Though war and danger were in store, war and danger might not befall for months to come. There was a respite at any rate, which made the timid little Amelia almost as happy as a full reprieve would have done, and which even Dobbin owned in his heart was very welcome. For to be permitted to see her was now the greatest

privilege and hope of his life, and he thought with himself secretly how he would watch and protect her. "I wouldn't have let her go if I had been married to her," he thought. But George was the master, and his friend did not think fit to remonstrate.

Putting her arm round her friend's waist, Rebecca at length carried Amelia off from the dinner table where so much business of importance had been discussed, and left the gentlemen in a highly exhilarated state, drinking and talking very gaily.

In the course of the evening Rawdon got a little family note from his wife, which, although he crumpled it up and burnt it instantly in the candle, we had the good luck to read over Rebecca's shoulder. "Great news," she wrote. "Mrs. Bute is gone. Get the money from Cupid tonight, as he'll be off tomorrow most likely. Mind this, R." So when the little company was about adjourning to coffee in the women's apartment, Rawdon touched Osborne on the elbow and said gracefully, "I say, Osborne, my boy, if quite convenient, I'll trouble you for that 'ere small trifle." It was not quite convenient, but nevertheless George gave him a considerable present installment in banknotes from his pocketbook, and a bill on his agents at a week's date for the remaining sum.

This matter arranged, George and Jos and Dobbin held a council of war over their cigars, and agreed that a general move should be made for London in Jos's open carriage the next day. Jos, I think, would have preferred staying until Rawdon Crawley quitted Brighton, but Dobbin and George overruled him, and he agreed to carry the party to town, and ordered four horses, as became his dignity. With these they set off in state after breakfast the next day. Amelia had risen very early in the morning and packed her little trunks with the greatest alacrity while Osborne lay in bed deploring that she had not a maid to help her. She was only too glad, however, to perform this office for herself. A dim, uneasy sentiment about Rebecca filled her mind already, and although they kissed each other most tenderly at parting, yet we know what jealousy is, and Mrs. Amelia possessed that among other virtues of her sex.

Besides these characters who are coming and going away, we must remember that there were some other old friends of ours at Brighton—Miss Crawley, namely, and the suite in attendance upon her. Now although Rebecca and her husband were but a few stones' throw of the lodgings which the invalid Miss Crawley occupied, the old lady's door remained as pitilessly closed to them as it had been heretofore in London. As long as she remained by the side of her sister-in-law, Mrs. Bute Crawley took care that her beloved Matilda should not be agitated by a meeting with her nephew. When the spinster took her drive, the faithful Mrs. Bute sat beside her in the carriage. When Miss Crawley took the air in a chair, Mrs. Bute marched on one side of the vehicle while honest Briggs occupied the other wing. And if they met Rawdon and his wife by chance, although the former constantly and obsequiously took off his hat, the Miss Crawley party passed him by with such frigid and killing indifference that Rawdon began to despair.

"We might as well be in London as here," Captain Rawdon often said, with a downcast air.

"A comfortable inn in Brighton is better than a sponging house in Chancery Lane," his wife answered, who was of a more cheerful temperament. "Think of those two aides-de-camp of Mr. Moses, the sheriff's officer, who watched our lodging for a week. Our friends here are very stupid, but Mr. Jos and Captain Cupid are better companions than Mr. Moses's men, Rawdon, my love."

"I wonder the writs haven't followed me down here," Rawdon continued, still desponding.

"When they do, we'll find means to give them the slip," said dauntless little Becky, and further pointed out to her husband the great comfort and advantage of meeting Jos and Osborne, whose acquaintance had brought to Rawdon Crawley a most timely little supply of ready money.

"It will hardly be enough to pay the inn bill," grumbled the Guardsman.

"Why need we pay it?" said the lady, who had an answer for everything.

Through Rawdon's valet, who still kept up a trifling acquaintance with the male inhabitants of Miss Crawley's servants' hall and was instructed to treat the coachman to drink whenever they met, old Miss Crawley's movements were pretty well known by our young couple. And Rebecca luckily bethought herself of being unwell and of calling in the same apothecary who was in attendance upon the spinster, so that their information was, on the whole, tolerably complete. Nor was Miss Briggs, although forced to adopt a hostile attitude, secretly inimical to Rawdon and his wife. She was naturally of a kindly and forgiving disposition. Now that the cause of jealousy was removed, her dislike for Rebecca disappeared also, and she remembered the latter's invariable good words and good humor. And indeed she and Mrs. Firkin, the lady's maid, and the whole of Miss Crawley's household, secretly groaned under the tyranny of the triumphant Mrs. Bute.

As often will be the case, that good but imperious woman pushed her advantages too far and her successes quite unmercifully. She had in the course of a few weeks brought the invalid to such a state of helpless docility that the poor soul yielded herself entirely to her sister's orders, and did not even dare to complain of her slavery to Briggs or Firkin. Mrs. Bute measured out the glasses of wine which Miss Crawley was daily allowed to take with irresistible accuracy, greatly to the annoyance of Firkin and the butler, who found themselves deprived of control over even the sherry bottle. She apportioned the sweetbreads, jellies, chickens, their quantity and order. Night and noon and morning she brought the abominable drinks ordained by the doctor, and made her patient swallow them with so affecting an obedience that Firkin said, "My poor missus du take her physic like a lamb." She prescribed the drive in the carriage or the ride in the chair, and, in a word, ground down the old lady in her convalescence in such a way as only belongs to your proper-managing, motherly, moral woman.

If ever the patient faintly resisted and pleaded for a little bit more dinner or a little drop less medicine, the nurse threatened her with instantaneous death, when Miss Crawley instantly gave in. "She's no spirit left in her," Firkin remarked to Briggs. "She ain't 'ave called me a fool these three weeks." Finally,

Mrs. Bute had made up her mind to dismiss the aforesaid honest lady's maid, Mr. Bowls, the large confidential man, and Briggs herself, and to send for her daughters from the rectory, previous to removing the dear invalid bodily to Queen's Crawley, when an odious accident happened which called her away from duties so pleasing. The Reverend Bute Crawley, her husband, riding home one night, fell with his horse and broke his collarbone. Fever and inflammatory symptoms set in, and Mrs. Bute was forced to leave Sussex for Hampshire. As soon as ever Bute was restored, she promised to return to her dearest friend, and departed leaving the strongest injunctions with the household regarding their behavior to their mistress. And as soon as she got into the Southampton coach, there was such a jubilee and sense of relief in all Miss Crawley's house as the company of persons assembled there had not experienced for many a week before. That very day Miss Crawley left off her afternoon dose of medicine; that afternoon Bowls opened an independent bottle of sherry for himself and Mrs. Firkin; that night Miss Crawley and Miss Briggs indulged in a game of piquet instead of one of Porteus's sermons.

At a very early hour in the morning, twice or thrice a week, Miss Briggs used to betake herself to a bathing machine and disport in the water in a flannel gown and an oilskin cap. Rebecca, as we have seen, was aware of this circumstance, and though she did not attempt to storm Briggs as she had threatened and actually dive into that lady's presence and surprise her under the sacredness of the awning, Mrs. Rawdon determined to attack Briggs as she came away from her bath refreshed and invigorated by her dip, and likely to be in good humor.

So getting up very early the next morning, Becky brought the telescope in their sitting-room, which faced the sea, to bear upon the bathing machines on the beach; saw Briggs arrive, enter her box, and put out to sea; and was on the shore just as the nymph of whom she came in quest stepped out of the little caravan onto the shingles. It was a pretty picture; the beach, the bathing women's faces, the long line of rocks and building, were blushing and bright in the sunshine. Rebecca wore a kind, tender smile on her face, and was holding out her pretty white hand as Briggs emerged from the box. What could Briggs do but accept the salutation?

"Miss Sh—, Mrs. Crawley," she said.

Mrs. Crawley seized her hand, pressed it to her heart, and with a sudden impulse, flinging her arms round Briggs, kissed her affectionately. "Dear, dear friend!" she said, with a touch of such natural feeling that Miss Briggs of course at once began to melt, and even the bathing woman was mollified.

Rebecca found no difficulty in engaging Briggs in a long, intimate, and delightful conversation. Everything that had passed since the morning of Becky's sudden departure from Miss Crawley's house in Park Lane up to the present day and Mrs. Bute's happy retreat was discussed and described by Briggs. All Miss Crawley's symptoms, and the particulars of her illness and medical treatment, were narrated by the confidante with that fullness and accuracy which women delight in. About their complaints and their doctors do ladies ever tire of talking to each other? Briggs did not on this occasion,

nor did Rebecca weary of listening. She was thankful, truly thankful, that the dear, kind Briggs, that the faithful, the invaluable Firkin, had been permitted to remain with their benefactress through her illness. Heaven bless her! Though she, Rebecca, had seemed to act undutifully toward Miss Crawley, yet was not her fault a natural and excusable one? Could she help giving her hand to the man who had won her heart? Briggs, the sentimental, could only turn up her eyes to heaven at this appeal and heave a sympathetic sigh, and think that she too had given away her affections long years ago, and own that Rebecca was no very great criminal.

"Can I ever forget her who so befriended the friendless orphan? No, though she has cast me off," the latter said, "I shall never cease to love her, and I would devote my life to her service. As my own benefactress, as my beloved Rawdon's adored relative, I love and admire Miss Crawley, dear Miss Briggs, beyond any woman in the world, and next to her I love all those who are faithful to her. *I* would never have treated Miss Crawley's faithful friends as that odious, designing Mrs. Bute has done." Rawdon, who was all heart, Rebecca continued, although his outward manners might seem rough and careless, had said a hundred times, with tears in his eyes, that he blessed Heaven for sending his dearest Aunty two such admirable nurses as her attached Firkin and her admirable Miss Briggs. Should the machinations of the horrible Mrs. Bute end, as she too much feared they would, in banishing everybody that Miss Crawley loved from her side and leaving that poor lady a victim to those harpies at the rectory, Rebecca besought her (Miss Briggs) to remember that her own home, humble as it was, was always open to receive Briggs. "Dear friend," she exclaimed, in a transport of enthusiasm, "*some* hearts can *never* forget benefits—*all* women are not Bute Crawleys! Though why should I complain of her?" Rebecca added. "Though I have been her tool and the victim to her arts, do I not owe my dearest Rawdon to her?" And Rebecca unfolded to Briggs all Mrs. Bute's conduct at Queen's Crawley, which, though unintelligible to her then, was clearly enough explained by the events now—now that the attachment had sprung up which Mrs. Bute had encouraged by a thousand artifices, now that two innocent people had fallen into the snares which she had laid for them, and loved and married and been ruined through her schemes.

It was all very true. Briggs saw the stratagems as clearly as possible. Mrs. Bute had made the match between Rawdon and Rebecca. Yet though the latter was a perfectly innocent victim, Miss Briggs could not disguise from her friend her fear that Miss Crawley's affections were hopelessly estranged from Rebecca, and that the old lady would never forgive her nephew for making so imprudent a marriage.

On this point Rebecca had her own opinion, and still kept up a good heart. If Miss Crawley did not forgive them at present, she might at least relent on a future day. Even now there was only that puling, sickly Pitt Crawley between Rawdon and a baronetcy, and should anything happen to the former, all would be well. At all events, to have Mrs. Bute's designs exposed, and herself well abused, was a satisfaction, and might be advantageous to Rawdon's interest. And Rebecca, after an hour's chat with her recovered friend, left her with the

most tender demonstrations of regard and quite assured that the conversation they had had together would be reported to Miss Crawley before many hours were over.

This interview ended, it became full time for Rebecca to return to her inn, where all the party of the previous day were assembled at a farewell breakfast. Rebecca took such a tender leave of Amelia as became two women who loved each other as sisters; and having used her handkerchief plentifully, and hung on her friend's neck as if they were parting forever, and waved the handkerchief (which was quite dry, by-the-way) out of window as the carriage drove off, she came back to the breakfast table and ate some prawns with a good deal of appetite, considering her emotion. And while she was munching these delicacies explained to Rawdon what had occurred in her morning walk between herself and Briggs. Her hopes were very high; she made her husband share them. She generally succeeded in making her husband share all her opinions, whether melancholy or cheerful.

"You will now, if you please, my dear, sit down at the writing table and pen me a pretty little letter to Miss Crawley, in which you'll say that you are a good boy, and that sort of thing." So Rawdon sat down, and wrote off, "Brighton, Thursday," and "My dear Aunt," with great rapidity, but there the gallant officer's imagination failed him. He mumbled the end of his pen and looked up in his wife's face. She could not help laughing at his rueful countenance, and marching up and down the room with her hands behind her, the little woman began to dictate a letter, which he took down.

"Before quitting the country and commencing a campaign which very possibly may be fatal——"

"What?" said Rawdon, rather surprised, but took the humor of the phrase, and presently wrote it down with a grin.

"Which very possibly may be fatal, I have come hither——"

"Why not say come here, Becky? Come here's grammar," the dragoon interposed.

"I have come hither," Rebecca insisted, with a stamp of her foot, "to say farewell to my dearest and earliest friend. I beseech you before I go, not perhaps to return, once more to let me press the hand from which I have received nothing but kindnesses all my life."

"Kindnesses all my life," echoed Rawdon, scratching down the words and quite amazed at his own facility of composition.

"I ask nothing from you but that we should part not in anger. I have the pride of my family on some points, though not on all. I married a painter's daughter, and am not ashamed of the union."

"No, run me through the body if I am!" Rawdon ejaculated.

"You old booby," Rebecca said, pinching his ear and looking over to see that he made no mistakes in spelling—"beseech is not spelled with an *a*, and earliest is." So he altered these words, bowing to the superior knowledge of his little missis.

"I thought that you were aware of the progress of my attachment," Rebecca continued. "I knew that Mrs. Bute Crawley confirmed and encouraged it.

But I make no reproaches. I married a poor woman, and am content to abide by what I have done. Leave your property, dear Aunt, as you will. *I* shall never complain of the way in which you dispose of it. I would have you believe that I love you for yourself, and not for money's sake. I want to be reconciled to you ere I leave England. Let me, let me see you before I go. A few weeks or months hence it may be too late, and I cannot bear the notion of quitting the country without a kind word of farewell from you.

"She won't recognize my style in *that*," said Becky. "I made the sentences short and brisk on purpose." And this authentic missive was dispatched under cover to Miss Briggs.

Old Miss Crawley laughed when Briggs, with great mystery, handed her over this candid and simple statement. "We may read it now Mrs. Bute is away," she said. "Read it to me, Briggs."

When Briggs had read the epistle out, her patroness laughed more. "Don't you see, you goose," she said to Briggs, who professed to be much touched by the honest affection which pervaded the composition—"don't you see that Rawdon never wrote a word of it? He never wrote to me without asking for money in his life, and all his letters are full of bad spelling and dashes and bad grammar. It is that little serpent of a governess who rules him." "They are all alike," Miss Crawley thought in her heart. "They all want me dead, and are hankering for my money."

"I don't mind seeing Rawdon," she added, after a pause, and in a tone of perfect indifference. "I had just as soon shake hands with him as not. Provided there is no scene, why shouldn't we meet? I don't mind. But human patience has its limits, and mind, my dear, I respectfully decline to receive Mrs. Rawdon—I can't support *that* quite." And Miss Briggs was fain to be content with this half-message of conciliation, and thought that the best method of bringing the old lady and her nephew together was to warn Rawdon to be in waiting on the cliff when Miss Crawley went out for her air in her chair.

There they met. I don't know whether Miss Crawley had any private feeling of regard or emotion upon seeing her old favorite, but she held out a couple of fingers to him with as smiling and good-humored an air as if they had met only the day before. And as for Rawdon, he turned as red as scarlet, and wrung off Briggs's hand, so great was his rapture and his confusion at the meeting. Perhaps it was interest that moved him, or perhaps affection; perhaps he was touched by the change which the illness of the last weeks had wrought in his aunt.

"The old girl has always acted like a trump to me," he said to his wife as he narrated the interview, "and I felt, you know, rather queer, and that sort of thing. I walked by the side of the what-d'ye-call-'em, you know, and to her own door, where Bowls came to help her in. And I wanted to go in very much, only——"

"*You didn't go in*, Rawdon!" screamed his wife.

"No, my dear, I'm hanged if I wasn't afraid when it came to the point."

"You fool! You ought to have gone in and never come out again," Rebecca said.

"Don't call me names," said the big Guardsman sulkily. "Perhaps I *was* a fool, Becky, but you shouldn't say so." And he gave his wife a look such as his countenance could wear when angered, and such as was not pleasant to face.

"Well, dearest, tomorrow you must be on the lookout and go and see her, mind, whether she asks you or no," Rebecca said, trying to soothe her angry yoke mate. On which he replied that he would do exactly as he liked, and would just thank her to keep a civil tongue in her head, and the wounded husband went away and passed the forenoon at the billiard room, sulky, silent, and suspicious.

But before the night was over he was compelled to give in, and own, as usual, to his wife's superior prudence and foresight, by the most melancholy confirmation of the presentiments which she had regarding the consequences of the mistake which he had made. Miss Crawley *must* have had some emotion upon seeing him and shaking hands with him after so long a rupture. She mused upon the meeting a considerable time.

"Rawdon is getting very fat and old, Briggs," she said to her companion. "His nose has become red, and he is exceedingly coarse in appearance. His marriage to that woman has hopelessly vulgarized him. Mrs. Bute always said they drank together, and I have no doubt they do. Yes, he smelt of gin abominably. I remarked it. Didn't you?"

In vain Briggs interposed that Mrs. Bute spoke ill of everybody, and as far as a person in *her* humble position could judge, was an——

"An artful, designing woman? Yes, so she is, and she does speak ill of everyone; but I am certain that woman has made Rawdon drink. All those low people do——"

"He was very much affected at seeing you, ma'am," the companion said, "and I am sure, when you remember that he is going to the field of danger——"

"How much money has he promised you, Briggs?" the old spinster cried out, working herself into a nervous rage. "There now, of course you begin to cry. I hate scenes. Why am I always to be worried? Go and cry up in your own room and send Firkin to me—no, stop, sit down and blow your nose and leave off crying, and write a letter to Captain Crawley." Poor Briggs went and placed herself obediently at the writing book. Its leaves were blotted all over with relics of the firm, strong, rapid handwriting of the spinster's late amanuensis, Mrs. Bute Crawley.

"Begin 'My dear sir'—or 'Dear sir,' that will be better—and say you are desired by Miss Crawley—no, by Miss Crawley's medical man, by Mr. Creamer, to state that my health is such that all strong emotions would be dangerous in my present delicate condition, and that I must decline any family discussions or interviews whatever. And thank him for coming to Brighton, and so forth, and beg him not to stay any longer on my account. And Miss Briggs, you may add that I wish him a bon voyage, and that if he will take the trouble to call upon my lawyer's in Gray's Inn Square, he will find there a communication for him. Yes, that will do, and that will make him leave Brighton." The benevolent Briggs penned this sentence with the utmost satisfaction.

"To seize upon me the very day after Mrs. Bute was gone," the old lady prattled on. "It was too indecent. Briggs, my dear, write to Mrs. Crawley and say *she* needn't come back. No—she needn't—and she shan't—and I won't be a slave in my own house—and I won't be starved and choked with poison. They all want to kill me—all—all." And with this the lonely old woman burst into a scream of hysterical tears.

"I should have liked to see the old girl before we went," Rawdon said. "She looks so cut-up and altered that I'm sure she can't last long. I wonder what sort of a check I shall have at Waxy's. Two hundred—it can't be less than two hundred—hey, Becky?"

In consequence of the repeated visits of the aides-de-camp of the Sheriff of Middlesex, Rawdon and his wife did not go back to their lodgings at Brompton, but put up at an inn. Early the next morning Rebecca had an opportunity of seeing them as she skirted that suburb on her road to old Mrs. Sedley's house at Fulham, whither she went to look for her dear Amelia and her Brighton friends. They were all off to Chatham, thence to Harwich, to take shipping for Belgium with the regiment—kind old Mrs. Sedley very much depressed and tearful, solitary. Returning from this visit, Rebecca found her husband, who had been off to Gray's Inn and learned his fate. He came back furious.

"By Jove, Becky," says he, "she's only given me twenty pounds!"

Though it told against themselves, the joke was too good, and Becky burst out laughing at Rawdon's discomfiture.

CHAPTER XXV

On quitting Brighton, our friend George, as became a person of rank and fashion traveling in a barouche with four horses, drove in state to a fine hotel in Cavendish Square, where a suite of splendid rooms, and a table magnificently furnished with plate and surrounded by a half-dozen of black and silent waiters, was ready to receive the young gentleman and his bride. George did the honors of the place with a princely air to Jos and Dobbin, and Amelia for the first time, and with exceeding shyness and timidity, presided at what George called her own table.

The splendor of the entertainment, and the apartments in which it was given, alarmed Mr. Dobbin, who remonstrated after dinner when Jos was asleep in the great chair. But in vain he cried out against the enormity of turtle and champagne that was fit for an archbishop. "I've always been accustomed to travel like a gentleman," George said, "and damme, my wife shall travel like a lady. As long as there's a shot in the locker, *she* shall want for nothing," said the generous fellow, quite pleased with himself for his magnificence of spirit. Nor did Dobbin try to convince him that Amelia's happiness was not centered in turtle soup.

Awhile after dinner Amelia timidly expressed a wish to go and see her mamma at Fulham, which permission George granted her with some grum-

bling. And she tripped away to her enormous bedroom, in the center of which stood the enormous funereal bed "that the Emperor Halixander's sister slept in when the allied sufferings was here," and put on her little bonnet and shawl with the utmost eagerness and pleasure. George was still drinking claret when she returned to the dining-room, and made no signs of moving. "Aren't you coming with me, dearest?" she asked him. No, the "dearest" had "business" that night. His man should get her a coach and go with her. And the coach being at the door of the hotel, Amelia made George a little disappointed curtsy after looking vainly into his face once or twice, and went sadly down the great staircase, Captain Dobbin after, who handed her into the vehicle and saw it drive away to its destination. The very valet was ashamed of mentioning the address to the hackney coachman before the hotel waiters, and promised to instruct him when they got farther on.

Mrs. Sedley, you may be sure, clasped her daughter to her heart with all maternal eagerness and affection, running out of the door as the carriage drew up before the little garden gate to welcome the weeping, trembling young bride. Old Mr. Clapp, who was in his shirt sleeves trimming the garden plot, shrank back alarmed. The Irish servant lass rushed up from the kitchen and smiled a "God bless you!" Amelia could hardly walk along the flags and up the steps into the parlor. Let us respect Amelia and her mamma whispering and whimpering and laughing and crying in the parlor and the twilight. Old Mr. Sedley did. *He* had not divined who was in the carriage when it drove up. He had not flown out to meet his daughter, though he kissed her very warmly when she entered the room, and after sitting with the mother and daughter for a short time, he very wisely left the little apartment in their possession.

In honor of the young bride's arrival, her mother thought it necessary to prepare I don't know what festive entertainment, and after the first ebullition of talk, took leave of Mrs. George Osborne for a while, and dived down to the lower regions of the house to a sort of kitchen-parlor, there to take measures for the preparing of a magnificent ornamented tea. All people have their ways of expressing kindness, and it seemed to Mrs. Sedley that a muffin and a quantity of orange marmalade spread out in a little cut-glass saucer would be peculiarly agreeable refreshments to Amelia in her most interesting situation.

While these delicacies were being transacted below, Amelia, leaving the drawing-room, walked upstairs and found herself, she scarce knew how, in the little room which she had occupied before her marriage, and in that very chair in which she had passed so many bitter hours. She sank back in its arms as if it were an old friend and fell to thinking over the past week and the life beyond it. Already to be looking sadly and vaguely back, always to be pining for something which, when obtained, brought doubt and sadness rather than pleasure—here was the lot of our poor little creature and harmless, lost wanderer in the great, struggling crowds of Vanity Fair.

Here she sat and recalled to herself fondly that image of George to which she had knelt before marriage. Did she own to herself how different the real man was from that superb young hero whom she had worshiped? It requires many, many years—and a man must be very bad indeed—before a woman's pride

and vanity will let her own to such a confession. Then Rebecca's twinkling green eyes and baleful smile lighted upon her, and filled her with dismay. And so she sat for a while indulging in her usual mood of selfish brooding, in that very listless, melancholy attitude in which the honest maidservant had found her on the day when she brought up the letter in which George renewed his offer of marriage.

When the tea was finally announced, our young lady came downstairs a great deal more cheerful. She did not despond or deplore her fate, or think about George's coldness, or Rebecca's eyes, as she had been wont to do of late. She went downstairs, and kissed her father and mother, and talked to the old gentleman and made him more merry than he had been for many a day. She sat down at the piano which Dobbin had bought for her and sang over all her father's favorite old songs. She pronounced the tea to be excellent, and praised the exquisite taste in which the marmalade was arranged in the saucers. And in determining to make everybody else happy, she found herself so, and was sound asleep in the great funereal pavilion, and only woke up with a smile, when George arrived from the theater.

For the next day George had more important "business" to transact than that which took him to see Mr. Kean in Shylock. Immediately on his arrival in London he had written off to his father's solicitors signifying his royal pleasure that an interview should take place between them on the morrow. His hotel losses at billiards and cards to Captain Crawley had almost drained the young man's purse, which wanted replenishing before he set out on his travels, and he had no resource but to infringe upon the two thousand pounds which the attorneys were commissioned to pay over to him. He had a perfect belief in his own mind that his father would relent before very long. How could any parent be obdurate for a length of time against such a paragon as he was? If his mere past and personal merits did not succeed in mollifying his father, George determined that he would distinguish himself so prodigiously in the ensuing campaign that the old gentleman must give in to him. And if not? Bah! the world was before him. His luck might change at cards, and there was a deal of spending in two thousand pounds.

So he sent off Amelia once more in a carriage to her mamma, with strict orders and carte blanche to the two ladies to purchase everything requisite for a lady of Mrs. George Osborne's fashion who was going on a foreign tour. They had but one day to complete the outfit, and it may be imagined that their business therefore occupied them pretty fully. In a carriage once more, bustling about from milliner to linen draper, escorted back to the carriage by obsequious shopmen or polite owners, Mrs. Sedley was herself again almost, and sincerely happy for the first time since their misfortunes. Nor was Mrs. Amelia at all above the pleasure of shopping and bargaining and seeing and buying pretty things. (Would any man, the most philosophic, give twopence for a woman who was?) She gave herself a little treat, obedient to her husband's orders, and purchased a quantity of lady's gear, showing a great deal of taste and elegant discernment, as all the shopfolk said.

George, meanwhile, with his hat on one side, his elbows squared, and his

swaggering, martial air, made for Bedford Row, and stalked into the attorney's office as if he was lord of every pale-faced clerk who was scribbling there. He ordered somebody to inform Mr. Higgs that Captain Osborne was waiting, in a fierce and patronizing way, as if the *pékin* of an attorney, who had thrice his brains, fifty times his money, and a thousand times his experience, was a wretched underling who should instantly leave all his business in life to attend on the Captain's pleasure. He did not see the sneer of contempt which passed all round the room, from the first clerk to the articled gents, from the articled gents to the ragged writers and white-faced runners in clothes too tight for them, as he sat there tapping his boot with his cane and thinking what a parcel of miserable poor devils these were. The miserable poor devils knew all about his affairs. They talked about them over their pints of beer at their public-house clubs to other clerks of a night. Ye gods, what do not attorneys and attorneys' clerks know in London! Nothing is hidden from their inquisition, and their familiars mutely rule our city.

Perhaps George expected when he entered Mr. Higgs's apartment to find that gentleman commissioned to give him some message of compromise or conciliation from his father; perhaps his haughty and cold demeanor was adopted as a sign of his spirit and resolution; but if so, his fierceness was met by a chilling coolness and indifference on the attorney's part that rendered swaggering absurd. He pretended to be writing at a paper when the Captain entered. "Pray sit down, sir," said he, "and I will attend to your little affair in a moment. Mr. Poe, get the release papers, if you please," and then he fell to writing again.

Poe having produced those papers, his chief calculated the amount of two thousand pounds stock at the rate of the day, and asked Captain Osborne whether he would take the sum in a check upon the bankers or whether he should direct the latter to purchase stock to that amount. "One of the late Mrs. Osborne's trustees is out of town," he said indifferently, "but my client wishes to meet your wishes and have done with the business as quick as possible."

"Give me a check, sir," said the Captain very surlily. "Damn the shillings and halfpence, sir," he added as the lawyer was making out the amount of the draft, and, flattering himself that by this stroke of magnanimity he had put the old quiz to the blush, he stalked out of the office with the paper in his pocket.

The draft was upon our friends Hulker & Bullock of Lombard Street, to whose house, still thinking he was doing business, George bent his way, and from whom he received his money. Frederick Bullock, Esquire, whose yellow face was over a ledger at which sat a demure clerk, happened to be in the banking room when George entered. His yellow face turned to a more deadly color when he saw the Captain, and he slunk back guiltily into the inmost parlor. George was too busy gloating over the money (for he had never had such a sum before) to mark the countenance or the flight of the cadaverous suitor of his sister.

Fred Bullock told old Osborne of his son's appearance and conduct. "He came in as bold as brass," said Frederick. "He has drawn out every shilling. How long will a few hundred pounds last such a chap as that?" Osborne swore

with a great oath that he little cared when or how soon he spent it. Fred dined every day in Russell Square now. But altogether, George was highly pleased with his day's business. All his own baggage and outfit was put into a state of speedy preparation, and he paid Amelia's purchases with checks on his agents, and with the splendor of a lord.

CHAPTER XXVI

When Jos's fine carriage drove up to the inn door at Chatham, the first face which Amelia recognized was the friendly countenance of Captain Dobbin, who had been pacing the street for an hour past in expectation of his friend's arrival. The Captain, with shells on his frock coat and a crimson sash and saber, presented a military appearance which made Jos quite proud to be able to claim such an acquaintance, and the stout civilian hailed him with a cordiality very different from the reception which Jos vouchsafed to his friend in Brighton and Bond Street.

Along with the Captain was Ensign Stubble, who as the barouche neared the inn burst out with an exclamation of "By Jove! What a pretty girl!" highly applauding Osborne's choice. Indeed Amelia, dressed in her wedding pelisse and pink ribbons, with a flush in her face occasioned by rapid travel through the open air, looked so fresh and pretty as fully to justify the Ensign's compliment. Dobbin liked him for making it. As he stepped forward to help the lady out of the carriage Stubble saw what a pretty little hand she gave him, and what a sweet, pretty little foot came tripping down the step. He blushed profusely, and made the very best bow of which he was capable, to which Amelia, seeing the number of the —th regiment embroidered on the Ensign's cap, replied with a blushing smile, and a curtsy on her part which finished the young Ensign on the spot. Dobbin took most kindly to Mr. Stubble from that day, and encouraged him to talk about Amelia in their private walks, and at each other's quarters. It became the fashion, indeed, among all the honest young fellows of the —th to adore and admire Mrs. Osborne. Her simple, artless behavior and modest kindness of demeanor won all their unsophisticated hearts, all which simplicity and sweetness are quite impossible to describe in print. But who has not beheld these among women, and recognized the presence of all sorts of qualities in them, even though they say no more to you than that they are engaged to dance the next quadrille, or that it is very hot weather? George, always the champion of his regiment, rose immensely in the opinion of the youth of the corps by his gallantry in marrying the portionless young creature, and by his choice of such a pretty, kind partner.

In the sitting-room which was awaiting the travelers, Amelia, to her surprise, found a letter addressed to Mrs. Captain Osborne. It was a triangular billet on pink paper and sealed with a dove and an olive branch and a profusion of light-blue sealing wax, and it was written in a very large though undecided female hand.

"It's Peggy O'Dowd's fist," said George, laughing. "I know it by the kisses on the seal." And in fact it was a note from Mrs. Major O'Dowd requesting the pleasure of Mrs. Osborne's company that very evening to a small friendly party. "You must go," George said. "You will make acquaintance with the regiment there. O'Dowd goes in command of the regiment, and Peggy goes in command of O'Dowd."

But they had not been for many minutes in the enjoyment of Mrs. O'Dowd's letter when the door was flung open and a stout, jolly lady in a riding habit, followed by a couple of officers of Ours, entered the room.

"Sure, I couldn't stop till taytime. Present me, Garge, my dear fellow, to your lady. Madam, I'm deloighted to see ye, and to present to you me husband, Meejor O'Dowd." And with this the jolly lady in the riding habit grasped Amelia's hand very warmly, and the latter knew at once that the lady was before her whom her husband had so often laughed at. "You've often heard of me from that husband of yours," said the lady with great vivacity.

"You've often heard of her," echoed her husband, the Major.

Amelia answered, smiling, that she had.

"And small good he's told you of me," Mrs. O'Dowd replied, adding that George was a "wicked divvle."

"That I'll go bail for," said the Major, trying to look knowing, at which George laughed and Mrs. O'Dowd, with a tap of her whip, told the Major to be quiet, and then requested to be presented in form to Mrs. Captain Osborne.

"This, my dear," said George with great gravity, "is my very good, kind, and excellent friend Auralia Margaretta, otherwise called Peggy."

"Faith, you're right," interposed the Major.

"Otherwise called Peggy, lady of Major Michael O'Dowd of our regiment, and daughter of Fitzjurld Ber'sford de Burgo Malony, of Glenmalony, County Kildare."

Major O'Dowd, who had served his sovereign in every quarter of the world, and had paid for every step in his profession by some more than equivalent act of daring and gallantry, was the most modest, silent, sheep-faced, and meek of little men, and as obedient to his wife as if he had been her tay boy. At the mess table he sat silently, and drank a great deal. When full of liquor he reeled silently home. When he spoke, it was to agree with everybody on every conceivable point, and he passed through life in perfect ease and good humor. The hottest suns of India never heated his temper, and the Walcheren ague never shook it. He walked up to a battery with just as much indifference as to a dinner table; had dined on horseflesh and turtle with equal relish and appetite; and had an old mother, Mrs. O'Dowd of O'Dowdstown indeed, whom he had never disobeyed but when he ran away and enlisted, and when he persisted in marrying the odious Peggy Malony.

Peggy was one of five sisters, and eleven children, of the noble house of Glenmalony; but her husband, though her own cousin, was of the mother's side, and so had not the inestimable advantage of being allied to the Malonys, whom she believed to be the most famous family in the world. Having tried nine seasons at Dublin and two at Bath and Cheltenham and not finding a partner for

life, Miss Malony ordered her cousin Mick to marry her when she was about thirty-three years of age; and the honest fellow, obeying, carried her off to the West Indies to preside over the ladies of the —th regiment, into which he had just exchanged.

Before Mrs. O'Dowd was half an hour in Amelia's (or indeed in anybody else's) company this amiable lady told all her birth and pedigree to her new friend. "My dear," said she good-naturedly, "it was my intention that Garge should be a brother of my own, and my sister Glorvina would have suited him entirely. But as bygones are bygones, and he was engaged to yourself, why, I'm determined to take you as a sister instead, and to look upon you as such, and to love you as one of the family. Faith, you've got such a nice, good-natured face and way widg you that I'm sure we'll agree, and that you'll be an addition to our family anyway."

" 'Deed and she will," said O'Dowd with an approving air, and Amelia felt herself not a little amused and grateful to be thus suddenly introduced to so large a party of relations.

"We're all good fellows here," the Major's lady continued. "There's not a regiment in the service where you'll find a more united society nor a more agreeable messroom. There's no quarreling, bickering, slandthering, nor small talk among *us*. We all love each other."

"Especially Mrs. Magenis," said George, laughing.

"Mrs. Captain Magenis and me has made up, though her treatment of me would bring me gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

"And you with such a beautiful front of black, Peggy, my dear," the Major cried.

"Hould your tongue, Mick, you booby. Them husbands are always in the way, Mrs. Osborne, my dear. And as for my Mick, I often tell him he should never open his mouth but to give the word of command, or to put meat and drink into it. I'll tell you about the regiment, and warn you when we're alone. Introduce me to your brother now. Sure he's a mighty fine man, and reminds me of me cousin, Dan Malony (Malony of Ballymalony, my dear, you know, who mar'ied Ophalia Scully, of Oystherstown, own cousin to Lord Poldoody). Mr. Sedley, sir, I'm deloighted to be made known te ye. I suppose you'll dine at the mess today. (Mind that divvle of a docther, Mick, and whatever ye du, keep yourself sober for me party this evening.)"

"It's the 150th gives us a farewell dinner, my love," interposed the Major, "but we'll easy get a card for Mr. Sedley."

"Run, Simple (Ensign Simple, of Ours, my dear Amelia. I forgot to introjuice him to ye). Run in a hurry with Mrs. Major O'Dowd's compliments to Colonel Tavish, and Captain Osborne has brought his brother-in-law down, and will bring him to the 150th mess at five o'clock sharp—when you and I, my dear, will take a snack here, if you like." Before Mrs. O'Dowd's speech was concluded the young Ensign was trotting downstairs on his commission.

"Obedience is the soul of the army. We will go to our duty while Mrs. O'Dowd will stay and enlighten you, Emmy," Captain Osborne said, and the

two gentlemen, taking each a wing of the Major, walked out with that officer, grinning at each other over his head.

CHAPTER XXVII

The regiment with its officers was to be transported in ships provided by His Majesty's Government for the occasion, and in two days after the festive assembly at Mrs. O'Dowd's apartments, in the midst of cheering from all the East India ships in the river and the military on shore, the band playing "God save the King," the officers waving their hats, and the crews hurrahing gallantly, the transports went down the river and proceeded under convoy to Ostend. Meanwhile the gallant Jos had agreed to escort his sister and the Major's wife, the bulk of whose goods and chattels, including the famous bird of paradise and turban, were with the regimental baggage; so that our two heroines drove pretty much unencumbered to Ramsgate, where there were plenty of packets plying, in one of which they had a speedy passage to Ostend.

That period of Jos's life which now ensued was so full of incident that it served him for conversation for many years after, and even the tiger-hunt story was put aside for more stirring narratives which he had to tell about the great campaign of Waterloo. As soon as he had agreed to escort his sister abroad it was remarked that he ceased shaving his upper lip. At Chatham he followed the parades and drills with great assiduity. He listened with the utmost attention to the conversation of his brother officers (as he called them in afterdays sometimes), and learned as many military names as he could. In these studies the excellent Mrs. O'Dowd was of great assistance to him; and on the day, finally, when they embarked on board the *Lovely Rose*, which was to carry them to their destination, he made his appearance in a braided frock coat and duck trousers, with a foraging cap ornamented with a smart gold band. Having his carriage with him, and informing everybody on board confidentially that he was going to join the Duke of Wellington's army, folks mistook him for a great personage, a commissary general, or a government courier at the very least.

He suffered hugely on the voyage, during which the ladies were likewise prostrate, but Amelia was brought to life again as the packet made Ostend by the sight of the transports conveying her regiment, which entered the harbor almost at the same time with the *Lovely Rose*. Jos went in a collapsed state to an inn while Captain Dobbin escorted the ladies and then busied himself in freeing Jos's carriage and luggage from the ship and the customhouse, for Mr. Jos was at present without a servant, Osborne's man and his own pampered menial having conspired together at Chatham and refused point-blank to cross the water. This revolt, which came very suddenly, and on the last day, so alarmed Mr. Sedley Junior that he was on the point of giving up the expedition, but Captain Dobbin (who made himself immensely officious in the business, Jos said) rated him and laughed at him soundly, the mustachios

were grown in advance, and Jos finally was persuaded to embark. In place of the well-bred and well-fed London domestics, who could only speak English, Dobbin procured for Jos's party a swarthy little Belgian servant who could speak no language at all, but who, by his bustling behavior and by invariably addressing Mr. Sedley as "my lord," speedily acquired that gentleman's favor.

Everybody had such a perfect feeling of confidence in the leader (for the resolute faith which the Duke of Wellington had inspired in the whole English nation was as intense as that more frantic enthusiasm with which at one time the French regarded Napoleon), the country seemed in so perfect a state of orderly defense, and the help at hand in case of need so near and overwhelming, that alarm was unknown, and our travelers, among whom two were naturally of a very timid sort, were, like all the other multiplied English tourists, entirely at ease. The famous regiment with so many of whose officers we have made acquaintance was drafted in canalboats to Bruges and Ghent, thence to march to Brussels. Jos accompanied the ladies in the public boats, the which all old travelers in Flanders must remember for the luxury and accommodation they afforded. So prodigiously good was the eating and drinking on board these sluggish but most comfortable vessels that there are legends extant of an English traveler who, coming to Belgium for a week and traveling in one of these boats, was so delighted with the fare there that he went backward and forward from Ghent to Bruges perpetually until the railroads were invented, when he drowned himself on the last trip of the passage boat. Jos's death was not to be of this sort, but his comfort was exceeding, and Mrs. O'Dowd insisted that he only wanted her sister Glorvina to make his happiness complete. He sat on the roof of the cabin all day drinking Flemish beer, shouting for Isidor, his servant, and talking gallantly to the ladies.

His courage was prodigious. "Boney attack *us!*" he cried. "My dear creature, my poor Emmy, don't be frightened. There's no danger. The allies will be in Paris in two months, I tell you, when I'll take you to dine in the Palais Royal, by Jove! There are three hundred thousand Rooshians, I tell you, now entering France by Mayence and the Rhine—three hundred thousand under Wittgenstein and Barclay de Tolly, my poor love. You don't know military affairs, my dear. I do, and I tell you there's no infantry in France can stand against Rooshian infantry, and no general of Boney's that's fit to hold a candle to Wittgenstein. Then there are the Austrians, they are five hundred thousand if a man and they are within ten marches of the frontier by this time, under Schwartzenberg and Prince Charles. Then there are the Prooshians under the gallant Prince Marshal. Show me a cavalry chief like him now that Murat is gone. Hey, Mrs. O'Dowd? Do you think our little girl here need be afraid? Is there any cause for fear, Isidor? Hey, sir? Get some more beer."

Mrs. O'Dowd said that her Glorvina was not afraid of any man alive, let alone a Frenchman, and tossed off a glass of beer with a wink which expressed her liking for the beverage.

Since Amelia's introduction to the regiment George began to be rather ashamed of some of the company to which he had been forced to present her, and determined, as he told Dobbin (with what satisfaction to the latter it need

not be said), to exchange into some better regiment soon, and to get his wife away from those damned vulgar women. But this vulgarity of being ashamed of one's society is much more common among men than women (except very great ladies of fashion, who, to be sure, indulge in it), and Mrs. Amelia, a natural and unaffected person, had none of that artificial shamefacedness which her husband mistook for delicacy on his own part. Thus Mrs. O'Dowd had a cock's plume in her hat, and a very large "repayther" on her stomach, which she used to ring on all occasions, narrating how it had been presented to her by her fawther as she stipt into the car'ge after her mar'ge, and these ornaments, with other outward peculiarities of the Major's wife, gave excruciating agonies to Captain Osborne when his wife and the Major's came in contact, whereas Amelia was only amused by the honest lady's eccentricities, and not in the least ashamed of her company.

One day as some of our friends of the —th were sauntering in the flower market of Brussels, having been to see the Hôtel de Ville, which Mrs. Major O'Dowd declared was not near so large or handsome as her fawther's mansion of Glenmalony, an officer of rank, with an orderly behind him, rode up to the market and descending from his horse, came among the flowers and selected the very finest bouquet which money could buy. The beautiful bundle being tied up in a paper, the officer remounted, giving the nosegay into the charge of his military groom, who carried it with a grin, following his chief, who rode away in great state and self-satisfaction.

"Devilish fine horse—who is it?" George asked.

"You should see me brother Molloy Malony's horse, Molasses, that won the cop at the Curragh," the Major's wife was exclaiming, and was continuing the family history when her husband interrupted her by saying:

"It's General Tufto, who commands the —— cavalry division," adding quietly, "He and I were both shot in the same leg at Talavera."

"Where you got your step," said George with a laugh. "General Tufto! Then, my dear, the Crawleys are come."

Amelia's heart fell—she knew not why. The sun did not seem to shine so bright. The tall old roofs and gables looked less picturesque all of a sudden, though it was a brilliant sunset and one of the brightest and most beautiful days at the end of May.

Mr. Jos had hired a pair of horses for his open carriage, with which cattle and the smart London vehicle he made a very tolerable figure in the drives about Brussels. George purchased a horse for his private riding, and he and Captain Dobbin would often accompany the carriage in which Jos and his sister took daily excursions of pleasure. They went out that day in the park for their accustomed diversion, and there, sure enough, George's remark with regard to the arrival of Rawdon Crawley and his wife proved to be correct. In the midst of a little troop of horsemen consisting of some of the very greatest persons in Brussels, Rebecca was seen in the prettiest and tightest of riding habits mounted on a beautiful little Arab, which she rode to perfection (having acquired the art at Queen's Crawley, where the Baronet, Mr. Pitt,

and Rawdon himself had given her many lessons), and by the side of the gallant General Tufto.

Rebecca did not make for the carriage, but as soon as she perceived her old acquaintance Amelia seated in it, acknowledged her presence by a gracious word and smile, and by kissing and shaking her fingers playfully in the direction of the vehicle. Then she resumed her conversation with General Tufto, who asked who the fat officer was in the gold-laced cap, on which Becky replied that he was an officer in the East Indian service. But Rawdon Crawley rode out of the ranks of his company and came up and shook hands heartily with Amelia, and said to Jos, "Well, old boy, how are you?" and stared in Mrs. O'Dowd's face and at the black cock's feathers until she began to think she had made a conquest of him.

George, who had been delayed behind, rode up almost immediately with Dobbin, and they touched their caps to the august personages, among whom Osborne at once perceived Mrs. Crawley. He was delighted to see Rawdon leaning over his carriage familiarly and talking to Amelia, and met the aide-de-camp's cordial greeting with more than corresponding warmth. The nods between Rawdon and Dobbin were of the very faintest specimens of politeness.

The apparition of the great personages held them all in talk during the drive and at dinner, and until the hour came when they were all to go to the opera. It was almost like old England. The house was filled with familiar British faces and those toilets for which the British female has long been celebrated. Mrs. O'Dowd's was not the least splendid among these, and she had a curl on her forehead, and a set of Irish diamonds and cairngorms which outshone all the decorations in the house, in her notion. Her presence used to excruciate Osborne, but go she would upon all parties of pleasure on which she heard her young friends were bent. It never entered into her thought but that they must be charmed with her company.

"She's been useful to you, my dear," George said to his wife, whom he could leave alone with less scruple when she had this society. "But what a comfort it is that Rebecca's come! You will have her for a friend, and we may get rid now of this damned Irishwoman." To this Amelia did not answer yes or no, and how do we know what her thoughts were?

"Who is that wonderful woman with Amelia, Rawdon, love?" said a lady in an opposite box (who, almost always civil to her husband in private, was more fond than ever of him in company). "Don't you see that creature with a yellow thing in her turban, and a red satin gown, and a great watch?"

"Near the pretty little woman in white?" asked a middle-aged gentleman seated by the querist's side, with orders in his button and several underwaistcoats and a great, choky white stock.

"That pretty woman in white is Amelia, General. You are remarking all the pretty women, you naughty man."

"Only one, begad, in the world!" said the General, delighted, and the lady gave him a tap with a large bouquet which she had.

At the end of the act George was out of the box in a moment, and he was even going to pay his respects to Rebecca in her loge. He met Crawley in the

lobby, however, where they exchanged a few sentences upon the occurrences of the last fortnight.

"You found my check all right at the agent's?" George said, with a knowing air.

"All right, my boy," Rawdon answered. "Happy to give you your revenge. Governor come round?"

"Not yet," said George, "but he will, and you know I've some private fortune through my mother. Has Aunty relented?"

"Sent me twenty pound, damned old screw. When shall we have a meet? The General dines out on Tuesday. Can't you come Tuesday? I say, make Sedley cut off his mustache. What the devil does a civilian mean with a mustache and those infernal frogs to his coat! By-by. Try and come on Tuesday." And Rawdon was going off with two brilliant young gentleman of fashion who were, like himself, on the staff of a general officer.

George was only half pleased to be asked to dinner on that particular day when the General was *not* to dine. "I will go in and pay my respects to your wife," said he, at which Rawdon said, "Hm, as you please," looking very glum, and at which the two young officers exchanged knowing glances. George parted from them and strutted down the lobby to the General's box, the number of which he had carefully counted.

"*Entrez*," said a clear little voice, and our friend found himself in Rebecca's presence, who jumped up, clapped her hands together, and held out both of them to George, so charmed was she to see him. The General with the orders in his button stared at the newcomer with a sulky scowl, as much as to say "Who the devil are you?"

"My dear Captain George!" cried little Rebecca in an ecstasy. "How good of you to come! The General and I were moping together tête-à-tête. General, this is my Captain George of whom you heard me talk."

"Indeed," said the General, with a very small bow. "Of what regiment is Captain George?"

George mentioned the —th. How he wished he could have said it was a crack cavalry corps!

"Come home lately from the West Indies, I believe. Not seen much service in the late war. Quartered here, Captain George?" the General went on with killing haughtiness.

"Not Captain George, you stupid man, Captain Osborne," Rebecca said. The General all the while was looking savagely from one to the other.

"Captain Osborne, indeed! Any relation to the L— Osbornes?"

"We bear the same arms," George said, as indeed was the fact, Mr. Osborne having consulted with a herald in Long Acre and picked the L— arms out of the peerage when he set up his carriage fifteen years before. The General made no reply to this announcement, but took up his opera glass—the double-barreled lorgnon was not invented in those days—and pretended to examine the house. But Rebecca saw that his disengaged eye was working round in her direction, and shooting out bloodshot glances at her and George.

She redoubled in cordiality. "How is dearest Amelia? But I needn't ask. How

pretty she looks! And who is that nice good-natured-looking creature with her—a flame of yours? Oh, you wicked man! And there is Mr. Sedley eating ice, I declare—how he seems to enjoy it! General, why have we not had any ices?"

"Shall I go and fetch you some?" said the General, bursting with wrath.

"Let *me* go, I entreat you," George said.

"No, I will go to Amelia's box. Dear, sweet girl! Give me your arm, Captain George." And so saying, and with a nod to the General, she tripped into the lobby. She gave George the queerest, knowingest look when they were together—a look which might have been interpreted, "Don't you see the state of affairs, and what a fool I'm making of him?" But he did not perceive it. He was thinking of his own plans, and lost in pompous admiration of his own irresistible powers of pleasing.

Amelia's gentle eyes, too, had been fixed anxiously on the pair whose conduct had so chafed the jealous General; but when Rebecca entered her box she flew to her friend with an affectionate rapture which showed itself, in spite of the publicity of the place, for she embraced her dearest friend in the presence of the whole house, at least in full view of the General's glass, now brought to bear upon the Osborne party. Mrs. Rawdon saluted Jos too with the kindliest greeting. She admired Mrs. O'Dowd's large cairngorm brooch and superb Irish diamonds, and wouldn't believe that they were not from Golconda direct. She bustled, she chattered, she turned and twisted, and smiled upon one and smirked on another, all in full view of the jealous opera glass opposite. And when the time for the ballet came (in which there was no dancer that went through her grimaces or performed her comedy of action better) she skipped back to her own box, leaning on Captain Dobbin's arm this time. No, she would not have George's, he must stay and talk to his dearest, best little Amelia.

"What a humbug that woman is!" honest old Dobbin mumbled to George when he came back from Rebecca's box, whither he had conducted her in perfect silence and with a countenance as glum as an undertaker's. "She writhes and twists about like a snake. All the time she was here, didn't you see, George, how she was acting at the General over the way?"

"Humbug—acting! Hang it, she's the nicest little woman in England," George replied, showing his white teeth and giving his ambrosial whiskers a twirl. "You ain't a man of the world, Dobbin. Damme, look at her now—she's talked over Tufto in no time. Look how he's laughing! Gad, what a shoulder she has! Emmy, why didn't you have a bouquet? Everybody has a bouquet."

"Faith, then, why didn't you *boy* one?" Mrs. O'Dowd said, and both Amelia and William Dobbin thanked her for this timely observation. But beyond this neither of the ladies rallied. Amelia was overpowered by the flash and the dazzle and the fashionable talk of her worldly rival. Even the O'Dowd was silent and subdued after Becky's brilliant apparition.

CHAPTER XXVIII

There never was, since the days of Darius, such a brilliant train of camp followers as hung round the train of the Duke of Wellington's army in the Low Countries in 1815, and led it dancing and feasting, as it were, up to the very brink of battle. A certain ball which a noble Duchess gave at Brussels on the fifteenth of June in the above-named year is historical. All Brussels had been in a state of excitement about it, and I have heard from ladies who were in that town at the period that the talk and interest of persons of their own sex regarding the ball was much greater even than in respect of the enemy in their front. The struggles, intrigues, and prayers to get tickets were such as only English ladies will employ in order to gain admission to the society of the great of their own nation.

Jos and Mrs. O'Dowd, who were panting to be asked, strove in vain to procure tickets, but others of our friends were more lucky. George got a card for Captain and Mrs. Osborne, which circumstance greatly elated him. Dobbin, who was a friend of the general commanding the division in which their regiment was, came laughing one day to Mrs. Osborne and displayed a similar invitation, which made Jos envious and George wonder how the deuce *he* should be getting into society. Mr. and Mrs. Rawdon, finally, were of course invited, as became the friends of a general commanding a cavalry brigade.

On the appointed night George, having commanded new dresses and ornaments of all sorts for Amelia, drove to the famous ball, where his wife did not know a single soul. After placing Amelia on a bench, he left her to her own cogitations there, thinking, on his own part, that he had behaved very handsomely in getting her new clothes and bringing her to the ball, where she was free to amuse herself as she liked. Her thoughts were not of the pleasantest, and nobody except honest Dobbin came to disturb them.

While her appearance was an utter failure (as her husband felt with a sort of rage), Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's debut was, on the contrary, very brilliant. She arrived very late. Her face was radiant, her dress perfection. In the midst of the great persons assembled and the eyeglasses directed to her, Rebecca seemed to be as cool and collected as when she used to marshal Miss Pinkerton's little girls to church. Numbers of the men she knew already, and the dandies thronged round her. As for the ladies, it was whispered among them that Rawdon had run away with her from out of a convent, and that she was a relation of the Montmorency family. She spoke French so perfectly that there might be some truth in this report, and it was agreed that her manners were fine and her air distingué. Fifty would-be partners thronged round her at once, and pressed to have the honor to dance with her. But she said she was engaged, and only going to dance very little, and made her way at once to the place where Emmy sat, quite unnoticed and dismally unhappy. And so, to finish the poor child at once, Mrs. Rawdon ran and greeted affectionately her dearest

Amelia, and began forthwith to patronize her. She found fault with her friend's dress, and her hairdresser, and wondered how she could be so *chaussée*, and vowed that she must send her corsetière the next morning. She vowed that it was a delightful ball, that there was everybody that everyone knew, and only a *very* few nobodies in the whole room. It is a fact that in a fortnight, and after three dinners in general society, this young woman had got up the genteel jargon so well that a native could not speak it better; and it was only from her French being so good that you could know she was not a born woman of fashion.

George, who had left Emmy on her bench on entering the ballroom, very soon found his way back when Rebecca was by her dear friend's side. Becky was just lecturing Mrs. Osborne upon the follies which her husband was committing.

"For God's sake, stop him from gambling, my dear," she said, "or he will ruin himself. He and Rawdon are playing at cards every night, and you know he is very poor, and Rawdon will win every shilling from him if he does not take care. Why don't you prevent him, you little careless creature? Why don't you come to us of an evening, instead of moping at home with that Captain Dobbin? I dare say he is *très aimable*, but how could one love a man with feet of such size? Your husband's feet are darling—here he comes. Where have you been, wretch? Here is Emmy crying her eyes out for you. Are you coming to fetch me for the quadrille?" And she left her bouquet and shawl by Amelia's side and tripped off with George to dance. Women only know how to wound so. There is a poison on the tips of their little shafts which stings a thousand times more than a man's blunter weapon. Our poor Emmy, who had never hated, never sneered, all her life, was powerless in the hands of her remorseless little enemy.

George danced with Rebecca twice or thrice—how many times Amelia scarcely knew. She sat quite unnoticed in her corner except when Rawdon came up with some words of clumsy conversation, and later in the evening when Captain Dobbin made so bold as to bring her refreshments and sit beside her. He did not like to ask her why she was so sad, but as a pretext for the tears which were filling in her eyes she told him that Mrs. Crawley had alarmed her by telling her that George would go on playing.

"It is curious, when a man is bent upon play, by what clumsy rogues he will allow himself to be cheated," Dobbin said, and Emmy said, "Indeed!" She was thinking of something else. It was not the loss of the money that grieved her.

At last George came back for Rebecca's shawl and flowers. She was going away. She did not even condescend to come back and say good-by to Amelia. The poor girl let her husband come and go without saying a word, and her head fell on her breast. Dobbin had been called away, and was whispering deep in conversation with the general of the division, his friend, and had not seen this last parting. George went away then with the bouquet, but when he gave it to the owner there lay a note, coiled like a snake, among the flowers. Rebecca's eye caught it at once. She had been used to deal with notes in early life. She put out her hand and took the nosegay. He saw by her eyes as they

met that she was aware what she should find there. Her husband hurried her away, still too intent upon his own thoughts, seemingly, to take note of any marks of recognition which might pass between his friend and his wife. These were, however, but trifling. Rebecca gave George her hand with one of her usual quick, knowing glances, and made a curtsy and walked away. George bowed over the hand, said nothing in reply to a remark of Crawley's—did not hear it even, his brain was so throbbing with triumph and excitement—and allowed them to go away without a word.

His wife saw the one part at least of the bouquet scene. It was quite natural that George should come at Rebecca's request to get her her scarf and flowers—it was no more than he had done twenty times before in the course of the last few days—but now it was too much for her. "William," she said, suddenly clinging to Dobbin, who was near her, "you've always been very kind to me—I'm—I'm not well. Take me home." She did not know she called him by his Christian name, as George was accustomed to do. He went away with her quickly. Her lodgings were hard by, and they threaded through the crowd without, where everything seemed to be more astir than even in the ballroom within.

George had been angry twice or thrice at finding his wife up on his return from the parties which he frequented, so she went straight to bed now; but although she did not sleep, and although the din and clatter and the galloping of horsemen was incessant, she never heard any of these noises, having quite other disturbances to keep her awake.

Osborne meanwhile, wild with elation, went off to a play table and began to bet frantically. He won repeatedly. "Everything succeeds with me tonight," he said. But his luck at play even did not cure him of his restlessness, and he started up after a while, pocketing his winnings, and went to a buffet, where he drank off many bumpers of wine. Here, as he was rattling away to the people around, laughing loudly and wild with spirits, Dobbin found him. He had been to the card tables to look there for his friend. Dobbin looked as pale and grave as his comrade was flushed and jovial.

"Hullo, Dob! Come and drink, old Dob! The Duke's wine is famous. Give me some more, you sir," and he held out a trembling glass for the liquor.

"Come out, George," said Dobbin, still gravely. "Don't drink."

"Drink! There's nothing like it. Drink yourself, and light up your lantern jaws, old boy. Here's to you."

Dobbin went up and whispered something to him at which George, giving a start and a wild hurray, tossed off his glass, clapped it on the table, and walked away speedily on his friend's arm.

"The enemy has passed the Sambre," William said, "and our left is already engaged. Come away. We are to march in three hours."

Away went George, his nerves quivering with excitement at the news so long looked for, so sudden when it came. What were love and intrigue? He thought about a thousand things but these in his rapid walk to his quarters—his past life and future chances—the fate which might be before him—the wife, the child perhaps, from whom unseen he might be about to part. Oh, how he

wished that night's work undone, and that with a clear conscience at least he might say farewell to the tender and guileless being by whose love he had set such little store!

He thought over his brief married life. In those few weeks he had frightfully dissipated his little capital. How wild and reckless he had been! Should any mischance befall him, what was then left for her? How unworthy he was of her! Why had he married her? He was not fit for marriage. Why had he disobeyed his father, who had been always so generous to him? Hope, remorse, ambition, tenderness, and selfish regret filled his heart. He sat down and wrote to his father, remembering what he had said once before, when he was engaged to fight a duel. Dawn faintly streaked the sky as he closed this farewell letter. He sealed it, and kissed the superscription. He thought how he had deserted that generous father, and of the thousand kindnesses which the stern old man had done him.

He had looked into Amelia's bedroom when he entered. She lay quiet and her eyes seemed closed, and he was glad that she was asleep. On arriving at his quarters from the ball, he had found his regimental servant already making preparations for his departure. The man had understood his signal to be still, and these arrangements were very quickly and silently made. Should he go in and wake Amelia, he thought, or leave a note for her brother to break the news of departure to her? He went in to look at her once again.

She had been awake when he first entered her room, but had kept her eyes closed so that even her wakefulness should not seem to reproach him. But when he had returned, so soon after herself too, this timid little heart had felt more at ease, and turning toward him as he stepped softly out of the room, she had fallen into a light sleep. George came in and looked at her again, entering still more softly. By the pale night lamp he could see her sweet, pale face; the purple eyelids were fringed and closed, and one round arm, smooth and white, lay outside of the coverlet. Good God, how pure she was, how gentle, how tender, and how friendless! And he, how selfish, brutal, and black with crime! Heart-stained and shame-stricken, he stood at the bed's foot and looked at the sleeping girl. How dared he—who was he—to pray for one so spotless! God bless her! God bless her! He came to the bedside and looked at the hand, the little soft hand, lying asleep, and he bent over the pillow noiselessly toward the gentle, pale face.

Two fair arms closed tenderly round his neck as he stooped down. "I am awake, George," the poor child said, with a sob fit to break the little heart that nestled so closely by his own. She was awake, poor soul—and to what? At that moment a bugle from the Place of Arms began sounding clearly and was taken up through the town, and amid the drums of the infantry and the shrill pipes of the Scotch, the whole city awoke.

CHAPTER XXIX

KNOWING how useless regrets are, and how the indulgence of sentiment only serves to make people more miserable, Mrs. Rebecca wisely determined to give way to no vain feelings of sorrow, and bore the parting from her husband with quite a Spartan equanimity. Indeed, Captain Rawdon himself was much more affected at the leavetaking than the resolute little woman to whom he bade farewell. She had mastered this rude, coarse nature, and he loved and worshiped her with all his faculties of regard and admiration. In all his life he had never been so happy as during the past few months his wife had made him. All former delights of turf, mess, hunting field, and gambling table—all previous loves and courtships of milliners, opera dancers, and the like easy triumphs of the clumsy military Adonis—were quite insipid when compared to the lawful matrimonial pleasures which of late he had enjoyed. She had known perpetually how to divert him, and he had found his house and her society a thousand times more pleasant than any place or company which he had ever frequented from his childhood until now. And he cursed his past follies and extravagances, and bemoaned his vast outlying debts above all, which must remain forever as obstacles to prevent his wife's advancement in the world. He had often groaned over these in midnight conversations with Rebecca, although as a bachelor they had never given him any disquiet. He himself was struck with this phenomenon.

"Hang it," he would say (or perhaps use a still stronger expression out of his simple vocabulary), "before I was married I didn't care what bills I put my name to, and so long as Moses would wait or Levy would renew for three months, I kept on never minding. But since I'm married, except renewing, of course, I give you my honor I've not touched a bit of stamped paper."

Rebecca always knew how to conjure away these moods of melancholy. "Why, my stupid love," she would say, "we have not done with your aunt yet. If she fails us, isn't there what you call the *Gazette?* Or stop, when your Uncle Bute's life drops, I have another scheme. The living has always belonged to the younger brother, and why shouldn't you sell out and go into the Church?" The idea of this conversion set Rawdon into roars of laughter; you might have heard the explosion through the hotel at midnight, and the hawhaws of the great dragoon's voice. General Tufto heard him from his quarters on the first floor above them, and Rebecca acted the scene with great spirit, and preached Rawdon's first sermon—to the immense delight of the General—at breakfast.

But these were mere bygone days and talk. When the final news arrived that the campaign was opened and the troops were to march, Rawdon's gravity became such that Becky rallied him about it in a manner which rather hurt the feelings of the Guardsman. "You don't suppose I'm afraid, Becky, I should think," he said, with a tremor in his voice. "But I'm a pretty good mark for a shot, and you see if it brings me down, why I leave one and perhaps two behind

me whom I should wish to provide for, as I brought 'em into the scrape. It is no laughing matter *that*, Mrs. C, anyways."

Rebecca by a hundred caresses and kind words tried to soothe the feelings of the wounded lover. It was only when her vivacity and sense of humor got the better of this sprightly creature (as they would do under most circumstances of life, indeed) that she would break out with her satire, but she could soon put on a demure face. "Dearest love," she said, "do you suppose I feel nothing?" And hastily dashing something from her eyes, she looked up in her husband's face with a smile.

"Look here," said he. "If I drop, let us see what there is for you. I have had a pretty good run of luck here, and here's two hundred and thirty pounds. I have got ten napoleons in my pocket. That is as much as I shall want, for the General pays everything like a prince, and if I'm hit, why, you know I cost nothing. Don't cry, little woman, I may live to vex you yet. Well, I shan't take either of my horses, but shall ride the General's gray charger. It's cheaper, and I told him mine was lame. If I'm done, those two ought to fetch you something. Grigg offered ninety for the mare yesterday, before this confounded news came, and like a fool I wouldn't let her go under the two o's. Bullfinch will fetch his price any day, only you'd better sell him in this country, because the dealers have so many bills of mine and so I'd rather he shouldn't go back to England. Your little mare the General gave you will fetch something, and there's no damned livery-stable bills here as there are in London," Rawdon added with a laugh. "There's that dressing case cost me two hundred—that is, I owe two for it—and the gold tops and bottles must be worth thirty or forty. Please to put *that* up the spout, ma'am, with my pins and rings, and watch and chain and things. They cost a precious lot of money. Miss Crawley, I know, paid a hundred down for the chain and ticker. Gold tops and bottles, indeed! Dammy, I'm sorry I didn't take more now. Edwards pressed on me a silver-gilt bootjack, and I might have had a dressing case fitted up with a silver warming pan, and a service of plate. But we must make the best of what we've got, Becky, you know."

And so, making his last dispositions, Captain Crawley, who had seldom thought about anything but himself until the last few months of his life, when Love had obtained the mastery over the dragoon, went through the various items of his little catalogue of effects, striving to see how they might be turned into money for his wife's benefit in case any accident should befall him. He pleased himself by noting down with a pencil in his big schoolboy handwriting the various items of his portable property which might be sold for his widow's advantage—as, for example, "My double-barril by Manton, say 40 guineas; my driving cloak, lined with sable fur, £50; my dueling pistols, in rosewood case (same which I shot Captain Marker), £20; my regulation saddle holsters and housings; my Laurie ditto," and so forth, over all of which articles he made Rebecca the mistress.

Faithful to his plan of economy, the Captain dressed himself in his oldest and shabbiest uniform and epaulets, leaving the newest behind under his wife's (or it might be his widow's) guardianship. And this famous dandy of Windsor

and Hyde Park went off on his campaign with a kit as modest as that of a sergeant, and with something like a prayer on his lips for the woman he was leaving. He took her up from the ground and held her in his arms for a minute, tight-pressed against his strong-beating heart. His face was purple and his eyes dim as he put her down and left her. He rode by his General's side and smoked his cigar in silence as they hastened after the troops of the General's brigade, which preceded him; and it was not until they were some miles on their way that he left off twirling his mustache and broke silence.

And Rebecca, as we have said, wisely determined not to give way to unavailing sentimentality on her husband's departure. She waved him an adieu from the window, and stood there for a moment looking out after he was gone. The cathedral towers and the full gables of the quaint old houses were just beginning to blush in the sunrise. There had been no rest for her that night. She was still in her pretty ball dress, her fair hair hanging somewhat out of curl on her neck, and the circles round her eyes dark with watching. "What a fright I seem," she said, examining herself in the glass, "and how pale this pink makes one look!" So she divested herself of this pink raiment, in doing which a note fell out from her corsage, which she picked up with a smile and locked into her dressing box. And then she put her bouquet of the ball into a glass of water and went to bed, and slept very comfortably.

The town was quite quiet when she woke up at ten o'clock and partook of coffee, very requisite and comfortable after the exhaustion and grief of the morning's occurrences.

This meal over, she resumed honest Rawdon's calculations of the night previous, and surveyed her position. Should the worst befall, all things considered, she was pretty well-to-do. There were her own trinkets and trousseau, in addition to those which her husband had left behind. Rawdon's generosity when they were first married has already been described and lauded. Besides these and the little mare, the General, her slave and worshiper, had made her many very handsome presents in the shape of Cashmere shawls bought at the auction of a bankrupt French general's lady and numerous tributes from the jewelers' shops, all of which betokened her admirer's taste and wealth. As for "tickers," as poor Rawdon called watches, her apartments were alive with their clicking. For happening to mention one night that hers, which Rawdon had given to her, was of English workmanship and went ill, on the very next morning there came to her a little bijou marked Leroy, with a chain and cover charmingly set with turquoises, and another signed Breguet, which was covered with pearls, and yet scarcely bigger than a half-crown. General Tufto had bought one, and Captain Osborne had gallantly presented the other. Mrs. Osborne had no watch, though, to do George justice, she might have had one for the asking, and the honorable Mrs. Tufto in England had an old instrument of her mother's that might have served for the plate warming pan which Rawdon talked about.

Every calculation made of these valuables Mrs. Rebecca found, not without a pungent feeling of triumph and self-satisfaction, that should circumstances occur, she might reckon on six or seven hundred pounds at the very least to begin the world with; and she passed the morning, disposing, ordering, looking

out, and locking up her properties, in the most agreeable manner. Among the notes in Rawdon's pocketbook was a draft for twenty pounds on Osborne's banker. This made her think about Mrs. Osborne. "I will go and get the draft cashed," she said, "and pay a visit afterward to poor little Emmy." If this is a novel without a hero, at least let us lay claim to a heroine. No man in the British Army which has marched away, not the great Duke himself, could be more cool or collected in the presence of doubts and difficulties than the indomitable little aide-de-camp's wife.

CHAPTER XXX

Thus, all the superior officers being summoned on duty elsewhere, Jos Sedley was left in command of the little colony at Brussels, with Amelia invalided, Isidor, his Belgian servant, and the bonne who was maid of all work for the establishment as a garrison under him. Though he was disturbed in spirit, and his rest destroyed by Dobbin's interruption and the occurrences of the morning, Jos nevertheless remained for many hours in bed, wakeful and rolling about there until his usual hour of rising had arrived. The sun was high in the heavens and our gallant friends of the —th miles on their march before the civilian appeared in his flowered dressing gown at breakfast.

Several times during the forenoon Mr. Jos's Isidor went from his lodgings into the town and to the gates of the hotels and lodging houses round about the Parc, where the English were congregated, and there mingling with other valets, couriers, and lackeys, gathered such news as was abroad and brought back bulletins for his master's information. Almost all these gentlemen were in heart partisans of the Emperor, and had their opinions about the speedy end of the campaign. The Emperor's proclamation from Evesnes had been distributed everywhere plentifully in Brussels. "Soldiers!" it said. "This is the anniversary of Marengo and Friedland, by which the destinies of Europe were twice decided. Then, as after Austerlitz, as after Wagram, we were too generous. We believed in the oaths and promises of princes whom we suffered to remain upon their thrones. Let us march once more to meet them. We and they, are we not still the same men? Soldiers! These same Prussians who are so arrogant today were three to one against you at Jena, and six to one at Montmirail. Those among you who were prisoners in England can tell their comrades what frightful torments they suffered on board the English hulks. Madmen! A moment of prosperity has blinded them, and if they enter into France it will be to find a grave there!" But the partisans of the French prophesied a more speedy extermination of the Emperor's enemies than this, and it was agreed on all hands that Prussians and British would never return except as prisoners in the rear of the conquering army.

These opinions in the course of the day were brought to operate upon Mr. Sedley. He was told that the Duke of Wellington had gone to try and rally his army, the advance of which had been utterly crushed the night before.

"Crushed, psha!" said Jos, whose heart was pretty stout at breakfast time. "The Duke has gone to beat the Emperor as he has beaten all his generals before."

"His papers are burned, his effects are removed, and his quarters are being got ready for the Duke of Dalmatia," Jos's informant replied. "I had it from his own maître d'hôtel. Milor Duc de Richemont's people are packing up everything. His Grace has fled already, and the Duchess is only waiting to see the plate packed to join the King of France at Ostend."

"The King of France is at Ghent, fellow," replied Jos, affecting incredulity.

"He fled last night to Bruges, and embarks today from Ostend. The Duc de Berri is taken prisoner. Those who wish to be safe had better go soon, for the dikes will be opened tomorrow, and who can fly when the whole country is under water?"

"Nonsense, sir, we are three to one, sir, against any force Boney can bring into the field," Mr. Sedley objected. "The Austrians and the Russians are on their march. He must, he shall be crushed," Jos said, slapping his hand on the table.

"The Prussians were three to one at Jena, and he took their army and kingdom in a week. They were six to one at Montmirail, and he scattered them like sheep. The Austrian Army *is* coming, but with the Empress and the King of Rome at its head, and the Russians, bah! the Russians will withdraw. No quarter is to be given to the English, on account of their cruelty to our braves on board the infamous pontoons. Look here, here it is in black-and-white. Here's the proclamation of His Majesty the Emperor and King," said the now declared partisan of Napoleon, and taking the document from his pocket, Isidor sternly thrust it into his master's face and already looked upon the frogged coat and valuables as his own spoil.

Jos was, if not seriously alarmed as yet, at least considerably disturbed in mind. "Give me my coat and cap, sir," said he, "and follow me. I will go myself and learn the truth of these reports." Isidor was furious as Jos put on the braided frock. "Milor had better not wear that military coat," said he. "The Frenchmen have sworn not to give quarter to a single British soldier."

"Silence, sirrah!" said Jos with a resolute countenance still, and thrust his arm into the sleeve with indomitable resolution, in the performance of which heroic act he was found by Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, who at this juncture came up to visit Amelia and entered without ringing at the antechamber door.

Rebecca was dressed very neatly and smartly, as usual; her quiet sleep after Rawdon's departure had refreshed her, and her pink, smiling cheeks were quite pleasant to look at in a town and on a day when everybody else's countenance wore the appearance of the deepest anxiety and gloom. She laughed at the attitude in which Jos was discovered, and the struggles and convulsions with which the stout gentleman thrust himself into the braided coat.

"Are you preparing to join the army, Mr. Joseph?" she said. "Is there to be nobody left in Brussels to protect us poor women?" Jos succeeded in plunging into the coat, and came forward blushing and stuttering out excuses to his fair visitor. How was she after the events of the morning—after the fatigues

of the ball the night before? Monsieur Isidor disappeared into his master's adjacent bedroom, bearing off the flowered dressing gown.

"How good of you to ask," said she, pressing one of his hands in both her own. "How cool and collected you look when everybody else is frightened! How is our dear little Emmy? It must have been an awful, awful parting."

"Tremendous," Jos said.

"You men can bear anything," replied the lady. "Parting or danger are nothing to you. Own now that you were going to join the army and leave us to our fate. I know you were—something tells me you were. I was so frightened when the thought came into my head (for I do sometimes think of you when I am alone, Mr. Joseph) that I ran off immediately to beg and entreat you not to fly from us."

This speech might be interpreted, "My dear sir, should an accident befall the army and a retreat be necessary, you have a very comfortable carriage, in which I propose to take a seat." I don't know whether Jos understood the words in this sense. But he was profoundly mortified by the lady's inattention to him during their stay at Brussels. He had never been presented to any of Rawdon Crawley's great acquaintances; he had scarcely been invited to Rebecca's parties, for he was too timid to play much and his presence bored George and Rawdon equally, who neither of them, perhaps, liked to have a witness to the amusements in which the pair chose to indulge. "Ah!" thought Jos, "now she wants me she comes to me. When there is nobody else in the way she can think about old Joseph Sedley!" But besides these doubts, he felt flattered at the idea Rebecca expressed of his courage.

He blushed a good deal, and put on an air of importance. "I should like to see the action," he said. "Every man of any spirit would, you know. I've seen a little service in India, but nothing on this grand scale."

"You men would sacrifice anything for a pleasure," Rebecca answered. "Captain Crawley left me this morning as gay as if he were going to a hunting party. What does he care? What do any of you care for the agonies and tortures of a poor forsaken woman? (I wonder whether he *could* really have been going to the troops, this great, lazy gourmand?) Oh, dear Mr. Sedley, I have come to you for comfort—for consolation. I have been on my knees all the morning. I tremble at the frightful danger into which our husbands, our friends, our brave troops and allies, are rushing. And I come here for shelter and find another of my friends—the last remaining to me—bent upon plunging into the dreadful scene!"

"My dear madam," Jos replied, now beginning to be quite soothed, "don't be alarmed. I only said I should like to go—what Briton would not? But my duty keeps me here, I can't leave that poor creature in the next room." And he pointed with his finger to the door of the chamber in which Amelia was.

"Good, noble brother!" Rebecca said, putting her handkerchief to her eyes and smelling the eau de Cologne with which it was scented. "I have done you injustice, you have got a heart. I thought you had not."

"Oh, upon my honor!" Jos said, making a motion as if he would lay his

hand upon the spot in question. "You do me injustice, indeed you do—my dear Mrs. Crawley."

"I do, now your heart is true to your sister. But I remember two years ago—when it was false to me!" Rebecca said, fixing her eyes upon him for an instant and then turning away into the window.

Jos blushed violently. That organ which he was accused by Rebecca of not possessing began to thump tumultuously. He recalled the days when he had fled from her, and the passion which had once inflamed him—the days when he had driven her in his curricle, when she had knit the green purse for him, when he had sat enraptured gazing at her white arms and bright eyes.

"I know you think me ungrateful," Rebecca continued, coming out of the window and once more looking at him, and addressing him in a low, tremulous voice. "Your coldness, your averted looks, your manner when we have met of late—when I came in just now—all proved it to me. But were there no reasons why I should avoid you? Let your own heart answer that question. Do you think my husband was too much inclined to welcome you? The only unkind words I have ever had from him (I will do Captain Crawley that justice) have been about you—and most cruel, cruel words they were."

"Good gracious! What have I done?" asked Jos in a flurry of pleasure and perplexity. "What have I done—to—to——?"

"Is jealousy nothing?" said Rebecca. "He makes me miserable about you. And whatever it might have been once—my heart is all his. I am innocent now. Am I not, Mr. Sedley?"

All Jos's blood tingled with delight as he surveyed this victim to his attractions. A few adroit words, one or two knowing, tender glances of the eyes, and his heart was inflamed again and his doubts and suspicions forgotten. From Solomon downward, have not wiser men than he been cajoled and befooled by women? "If the worst comes to the worst," Becky thought, "my retreat is secure, and I have a right-hand seat in the barouche."

There is no knowing into what declarations of love and ardor the tumultuous passions of Mr. Joseph might have led him if Isidor, the valet, had not made his reappearance at this minute and begun to busy himself about the domestic affairs. Jos, who was just going to gasp out an avowal, choked almost with the emotion that he was obliged to restrain. Rebecca, too, bethought her that it was time she should go in and comfort her dearest Amelia. "Au revoir," she said, kissing her hand to Mr. Joseph, and tapped gently at the door of his sister's apartment. As she entered and closed the door on herself, he sank down in a chair and gazed and sighed and puffed portentously. "That coat is very tight for milor," Isidor said, still having his eye on the frogs; but his master heard him not, his thoughts were elsewhere, now glowing, maddening, upon the contemplation of the enchanting Rebecca, anon shrinking guiltily before the vision of the jealous Rawdon Crawley with his curling, fierce mustachios and his terrible dueling pistols loaded and cocked.

Rebecca's appearance struck Amelia with terror, and made her shrink back. It recalled her to the world and the remembrance of yesterday. In the overpowering fears about tomorrow she had forgotten Rebecca—jealousy—every-

thing except that her husband was gone and was in danger. Until this dauntless worldling came in and broke the spell, and lifted the latch, we too have forborne to enter into that sad chamber. How long had that poor girl been on her knees! What hours of speechless prayer and bitter prostration had she passed there! The war chroniclers who write brilliant stories of fight and triumph scarcely tell us of these. These are too mean parts of the pageant, and you don't hear widows' cries or mothers' sobs in the midst of the shouts and jubilation in the great chorus of victory. And yet, when was the time that such have not cried out, heartbroken, humble protestants unheard in the uproar of triumph?

After the first moment of terror in Amelia's mind—when Rebecca's green eyes lighted upon her, and rustling in her fresh silks and brilliant ornaments, the latter tripped up with extended arms to embrace her—a feeling of anger succeeded, and from being deadly pale before, her face flushed up red, and she returned Rebecca's look after a moment with a steadiness which surprised and somewhat abashed her rival.

"Dearest Amelia, you are very unwell," the visitor said, putting forth her hand to take Amelia's. "What is it? I could not rest until I knew how you were."

Amelia drew back her hand. Never since her life began had that gentle soul refused to believe or to answer any demonstration of goodwill or affection. But she drew back her hand, and trembled all over. "Why are *you* here, Rebecca?" she said, still looking at her solemnly with her large eyes. These glances troubled her visitor.

"She must have seen him give me the letter at the ball," Rebecca thought. "Don't be agitated, dear Amelia," she said, looking down. "I came but to see if I could— If you were well."

"Are you well?" said Amelia. "I dare say you are. You don't love your husband. You would not be here if you did. Tell me, Rebecca, did I ever do you anything but kindness?"

"Indeed, Amelia, no," the other said, still hanging down her head.

"When you were quite poor, who was it that befriended you? Was I not a sister to you? You saw us all in happier days before he married me. I was all in all then to him, or would he have given up his fortune, his family, as he nobly did to make me happy? Why did you come between my love and me? Who sent you to separate those whom God joined, and take my darling's heart from me—my own husband? Do you think you could love him as I did? His love was everything to me. You knew it, and wanted to rob me of it. For shame, Rebecca, bad and wicked woman—false friend and false wife."

"Amelia, I protest before God I have done my husband no wrong," Rebecca said, turning from her.

"Have you done *me* no wrong, Rebecca? You did not succeed, but you tried. Ask your heart if you did not."

"She knows nothing," Rebecca thought.

"He came back to me. I knew he would. I knew that no falsehood, no flattery, could keep him from me long. I knew he would come. I prayed so that he should."

The poor girl spoke these words with a spirit and volubility which Rebecca had never before seen in her, and before which the latter was quite dumb.

"But what have I done to you," she continued in a more pitiful tone, "that you should try and take him from me? I had him but for six weeks. You might have spared me those, Rebecca. And yet, from the very first day of our wedding you came and blighted it. Now he is gone, are you come to see how unhappy I am?" she continued. "You made me wretched enough for the past fortnight. You might have spared me today."

"I—I never came here," interposed Rebecca, with unlucky truth.

"No. You didn't come. You took him away. Are you come to fetch him from me?" she continued in a wilder tone. "He was here, but he is gone now. There on that very sofa he sat. Don't touch it. We sat and talked there. I was on his knee, and my arms were round his neck, and we said 'Our Father.' Yes, he was here, and they came and took him away, but he promised me to come back."

"He will come back, my dear," said Rebecca, touched in spite of herself.

"Look," said Amelia, "this is his sash—isn't it a pretty color?" And she took up the fringe and kissed it. She had tied it round her waist at some part of the day. She had forgotten her anger, her jealousy, the very presence of her rival seemingly. For she walked silently and almost with a smile on her face toward the bed and began to smooth down George's pillow.

Rebecca walked, too, silently away. "How is Amelia?" asked Jos, who still held his position in the chair.

"There should be somebody with her," said Rebecca. "I think she is very unwell." And she went away with a very grave face, refusing Mr. Sedley's entreaties that she would stay and partake of the early dinner which he had ordered.

Rebecca was of a good-natured and obliging disposition, and she liked Amelia rather than otherwise. Even her hard words, reproachful as they were, were complimentary—the groans of a person stinging under defeat. Meeting Mrs. O'Dowd, who was walking very disconsolately in the Parc, Rebecca accosted the latter, rather to the surprise of the Major's wife, who was not accustomed to such marks of politeness from Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, and informing her that poor little Mrs. Osborne was in a desperate condition, and almost mad with grief, sent off the good-natured Irishwoman straight to see if she could console her young favorite.

"I've cares of my own enough," Mrs. O'Dowd said bravely, "and I thought poor Amelia would be little wanting for company this day. But if she's so bad as you say, and you can't attend to her who used to be so fond of her, faith I'll see if I can be of service. And so good marning to ye, madam." With which speech and a toss of her head, the lady of the repaythers took a farewell of Mrs. Crawley, whose company she by no means courted.

The poor soul was still at the bedside, where Rebecca had left her, and stood almost crazy with grief. The Major's wife, a stronger-minded woman, endeavored her best to comfort her young friend. "You must bear up, Amelia, dear," she said kindly, "for he mustn't find you ill when he sends for you after

the victory. It's not you are the only woman that are in the hands of God this day."

"I know that. I am very wicked, very weak," Amelia said. She knew her own weakness well enough. The presence of the more resolute friend checked it, however, and she was the better of this control and company. They went on till two o'clock; their hearts were with the column as it marched farther and farther away. Dreadful doubt and anguish—prayers and fears and griefs unspeakable—followed the regiment. It was the women's tribute to the war. It taxes both alike, and takes the blood of the men and the tears of the women.

At half-past two an event occurred of daily importance to Mr. Joseph—the dinner hour arrived. Warriors may fight and perish, but he must dine. He came into Amelia's room to see if he could coax her to share that meal. "Try," said he. "The soup is very good. Do try, Emmy," and he kissed her hand. Except when she was married, he had not done so much for years before. "You are very good and kind, Joseph," she said. "Everybody is, but if you please, I will stay in my room today."

The savor of the soup, however, was agreeable to Mrs. O'Dowd's nostrils, and she thought she would bear Mr. Jos company. So the two sat down to their meal. "God bless the meat," said the Major's wife solemnly. She was thinking of her honest Mick riding at the head of his regiment. " 'Tis but a bad dinner those poor boys will get today," she said with a sigh and then, like a philosopher, fell to.

Jos's spirits rose with his meal. He would drink the regiment's health, or indeed take any other excuse to indulge in a glass of champagne. "We'll drink to O'Dowd and the brave —th," said he, bowing gallantly to his guest. "Hey, Mrs. O'Dowd? Fill Mrs. O'Dowd's glass, Isidor."

But all of a sudden Isidor started, and the Major's wife laid down her knife and fork. The windows of the room were open and looked southward, and a dull distant sound came over the sun-lighted roofs from that direction. "What is it?" said Jos. "Why don't you pour, you rascal?"

"*C'est le feu!*" said Isidor, running to the balcony.

"God defend us, it's cannon!" Mrs. O'Dowd cried, starting up, and followed too to the window. A thousand pale and anxious faces might have been seen looking from other casements. And presently it seemed as if the whole population of the city rushed into the streets.

CHAPTER XXXI

We of peaceful London City have never beheld—and please God never shall witness—such a scene of hurry and alarm as that which Brussels presented. Crowds rushed to the Namur gate, from which direction the noise proceeded, and many rode along the level chaussée, to be in advance of any intelligence from the army. Each man asked his neighbor for news, and even great English lords and ladies condescended to speak to persons whom they did not know.

The friends of the French were abroad, wild with excitement and prophesying the triumph of their Emperor. The merchants closed their shops and came out to swell the general chorus of alarm and clamor. Women rushed to the churches and crowded the chapels, and knelt and prayed on the flags and steps. The dull sound of the cannon went on rolling, rolling. Presently carriages with travelers began to leave the town, galloping away by the Ghent barrier. The prophecies of the French partisans began to pass for facts. "He has cut the armies in two," it was said. "He is marching straight on Brussels. He will overpower the English and be here tonight." "He will overpower the English," shrieked Isidor to his master, "and will be here tonight." The man bounded in and out from the lodgings to the street, always returning with some fresh particulars of disaster. Jos's face grew paler and paler. Alarm began to take entire possession of the stout civilian. All the champagne he drank brought no courage to him.

When the noise of the cannonading was over, Mrs. O'Dowd issued out of Amelia's room into the parlor adjoining, where Jos sat with two emptied flasks and courage entirely gone. Once or twice he had ventured into his sister's bedroom looking very much alarmed and as if he would say something. But the Major's wife kept her place, and he went away without disburdening himself of his speech. He was ashamed to tell her that he wanted to fly.

But when she made her appearance in the dining-room, where he sat in the twilight in the cheerless company of his empty champagne bottles, he began to open his mind to her.

"Mrs. O'Dowd," he said, "hadn't you better get Amelia ready?"

"Are you going to take her out for a walk?" said the Major's lady. "Sure she's too weak to stir."

"I—I've ordered the carriage," he said, "and—and post horses. Isidor is gone for them," Jos continued.

"What do you want with driving tonight?" answered the lady. "Isn't she better on her bed? I've just got her to lie down."

"Get her up," said Jos. "She must get up, I say," and he stamped his foot energetically. "I say the horses are ordered—yes, the horses are ordered. It's all over, and——"

"And what?" asked Mrs. O'Dowd.

"I'm off for Ghent," Jos answered. "Everybody is going—there's a place for you! We shall start in half an hour."

The Major's wife looked at him with infinite scorn. "I don't move till O'Dowd gives me the route," said she. "You may go if you like, Mr. Sedley, but, faith, Amelia and I stop here."

"She *shall* go," said Jos, with another stamp of his foot. Mrs. O'Dowd put herself with arms akimbo before the bedroom door.

"Is it her mother you're going to take her to?" she said. "Or do you want to go to Mamma yourself, Mr. Sedley? Good morning—a pleasant journey to ye, sir. Bon voyage, as they say, and take my counsel and shave off them mustachios or they'll bring you into mischief."

"Damn!" yelled out Jos, wild with fear, rage, and mortification, and Isidor

came in at this juncture, swearing in his turn. "*Pas de chevaux, sacrebleu!*" hissed out the furious domestic. All the horses were gone. Jos was not the only man in Brussels seized with panic that day.

Almost all the hotels occupied by the English in Brussels face the Parc, and Jos wandered irresolutely about in this quarter, with crowds of other people oppressed as he was by fear and curiosity. Some families he saw more happy than himself, having discovered a team of horses and rattling through the streets in retreat; others again there were whose case was like his own, and who could not for any bribes or entreaties procure the necessary means of flight. Among these would-be fugitives Jos remarked the Lady Bareacres and her daughter, who sat in their carriage in the porte-cochère of their hotel, all their imperials packed, and the only drawback to whose flight was the same want of motive power which kept Jos stationary.

Rebecca Crawley occupied apartments in this hotel, and had before this period had sundry hostile meetings with the ladies of the Bareacres family. My Lady Bareacres cut Mrs. Crawley on the stairs when they met by chance, and in all places where the latter's name was mentioned spoke perseveringly ill of her neighbor. The Countess was shocked at the familiarity of General Tufto with the aide-de-camp's wife. The Lady Blanche avoided her as if she had been an infectious disease. Only the Earl himself kept up a sly occasional acquaintance with her when out of the jurisdiction of his ladies.

Rebecca had her revenge now upon these insolent enemies. It became known in the hotel that Captain Crawley's horses had been left behind, and when the panic began, Lady Bareacres condescended to send her maid to the Captain's wife with her ladyship's compliments and a desire to know the price of Mrs. Crawley's horses. Mrs. Crawley returned a note with her compliments and an intimation that it was not her custom to transact bargains with ladies' maids.

This curt reply brought the Earl in person to Becky's apartment, but he could get no more success than the first ambassador. "Send a lady's maid to *me!*" Mrs. Crawley cried in great anger. "Why didn't my Lady Bareacres tell me to go and saddle the horses! Is it her ladyship that wants to escape, or her ladyship's femme de chambre?"

And this was all the answer that the Earl bore back to his Countess. What will not necessity do? The Countess herself actually came to wait upon Mrs. Crawley on the failure of her second envoy. She entreated her to name her own price, she even offered to invite Becky to Bareacres House if the latter would but give her the means of returning to that residence. Mrs. Crawley sneered at her.

"I don't want to be waited on by bailiffs in livery," she said. "You will never get back though, most probably—at least not you and your diamonds together. The French will have those. They will be here in two hours, and I shall be halfway to Ghent by that time. I would not sell you my horses, no, not for the two largest diamonds that your ladyship wore at the ball." Lady Bareacres trembled with rage and terror. The diamonds were sewed into her habit and secreted in my lord's padding and boots. "Woman, the diamonds are at the banker's and I *will* have the horses," she said. Rebecca laughed in her face. The

infuriated Countess went below and sat in her carriage. Her maid, her courier, and her husband were sent once more through the town, each to look for cattle, and woe betide those who came last! Her ladyship was resolved on departing the very instant the horses arrived from any quarter—with her husband or without him.

Rebecca had the pleasure of seeing her ladyship in the horseless carriage, and keeping her eyes fixed upon her, and bewailing, in the loudest tone of voice, the Countess's perplexities. "Not to be able to get horses!" she said. "And to have all those diamonds sewed into the carriage cushions! What a prize it will be for the French when they come—the carriage and the diamonds, I mean, not the lady." She gave this information to the landlord, to the servants, to the guests, and the innumerable stragglers about the courtyard. Lady Bareacres could have shot her from the carriage window.

It was while enjoying the humiliation of her enemy that Rebecca caught sight of Jos, who made toward her directly he perceived her. That altered, frightened, fat face told his secret well enough. He too wanted to fly, and was on the lookout for the means of escape. "*He* shall buy my horses," thought Rebecca, "and I'll ride the mare."

Jos walked up to his friend and put the question for the hundredth time during the past hour: Did she know where horses were to be had?

"What, *you* fly?" said Rebecca, with a laugh. "I thought you were the champion of all the ladies, Mr. Sedley."

"I—I'm not a military man," gasped he.

"And Amelia? Who is to protect that poor little sister of yours?" asked Rebecca. "You surely would not desert her?"

"What good can I do her, suppose—suppose the enemy arrive?" Jos answered. "They'll spare the women, but my man tells me that they have taken an oath to give no quarter to the men—the dastardly cowards."

"Horrid!" cried Rebecca, enjoying his perplexity.

"Besides, I don't want to desert her," cried the brother. "She *shan't* be deserted. There is a seat for her in my carriage, and one for you, dear Mrs. Crawley, if you will come and if we can get horses," sighed he.

"I have two to sell," the lady said. Jos could have flung himself into her arms at the news. "Get the carriage, Isidor," he cried. "We've found them—we have found them."

"My horses never were in harness," added the lady. "Bullfinch would kick the carriage to pieces if you put him in the traces."

"But he is quiet to ride?" asked the civilian.

"As quiet as a lamb, and as fast as a hare," answered Rebecca.

"Do you think he is up to my weight?" Jos said. He was already on his back in imagination, without ever so much as a thought for poor Amelia. What person who loved a horse speculation could resist such a temptation?

In reply, Rebecca asked him to come into her room, whither he followed her, quite breathless to conclude the bargain. Jos seldom spent a half-hour in his life which cost him so much money. Rebecca, measuring the value of the goods which she had for sale by Jos's eagerness to purchase as well as by the

scarcity of the article, put upon her horses a price so prodigious as to make even the civilian draw back. "She would sell both or neither," she said, resolutely. Rawdon had ordered her not to part with them for a price less than that which she specified. Lord Bareacres below would give her the same money —and with all her love and regard for the Sedley family, her dear Mr. Joseph must conceive that poor people must live. Nobody, in a word, could be more affectionate but more firm about the matter of business.

Jos ended by agreeing, as might be supposed of him. The sum he had to give her was so large that he was obliged to ask for time, so large as to be a little fortune to Rebecca, who rapidly calculated that with this sum, and the sale of the residue of Rawdon's effects, and her pension as a widow should he fall, she would now be absolutely independent of the world and might look her weeds steadily in the face.

Once or twice in the day she certainly had herself thought about flying. But her reason gave her better counsel. "Suppose the French do come," thought Becky, "what can they do to a poor officer's widow? Bah! the times of sacks and sieges are over. We shall be let to go home quietly, or I may live pleasantly abroad with a snug little income."

By the time Jos's bargain with Rebecca was completed and his horses had been visited and examined, it was almost morning once more. But though midnight was long passed, there was no rest for the city. The people were up, the lights in the houses flamed, crowds were still about the doors, and the streets were busy. Rumors of various natures went still from mouth to mouth. One report averred that the Prussians had been utterly defeated; another that it was the English who had been attacked and conquered; a third that the latter had held their ground. This last rumor gradually got strength. No Frenchmen had made their appearance. Stragglers had come in from the army bringing reports more and more favorable. At last an aide-de-camp actually reached Brussels with dispatches for the commandant of the place, who placarded presently through the town an official announcement of the success of the allies at Quatre-Bras, and the entire repulse of the French under Ney after a six hours' battle. The aide-de-camp must have arrived sometime while Jos and Rebecca were making their bargain together, or the latter was inspecting his purchase. When he reached his own hotel, he found a score of its numerous inhabitants on the threshold discoursing the news. There was no doubt as to its truth. And he went up to communicate it to the ladies under his charge. He did not think it was necessary to tell them how he had intended to take leave of them, how he had bought horses, and what a price he had paid for them.

But success or defeat was a minor matter to them, who had only thought for the safety of those they loved. Amelia, at the news of the victory, became still more agitated even than before. She was for going that moment to the army. She besought her brother with tears to conduct her thither. Her doubts and terrors reached their paroxysm, and the poor girl, who for many hours had been plunged into stupor, raved and ran hither and thither in hysteric insanity—a piteous sight. No man writhing in pain on the hard-fought field fifteen miles off, where lay, after their struggles, so many of the brave—no man

suffered more keenly than this poor harmless victim of the war. Jos could not bear the sight of her pain. He left his sister in the charge of her stouter female companion and descended once more to the threshold of the hotel, where everybody still lingered, and talked, and waited for more news.

It grew to be broad daylight as they stood here, and fresh news began to arrive from the war, brought by men who had been actors in the scene. Wagons and long country carts laden with wounded came rolling into the town; ghastly groans came from within them, and haggard faces looked up sadly from out of the straw. Jos Sedley was looking at one of these carriages with a painful curiosity—the moans of the people within were frightful—the wearied horses could hardly pull the cart. "Stop! stop!" a feeble voice cried from the straw, and the carriage stopped opposite Mr. Sedley's hotel.

"It is George, I know it is!" cried Amelia, rushing in a moment to the balcony with a pallid face and loose-flowing hair. It was not George, however, but it was the next best thing—it was news of him.

It was poor Tom Stubble, who had marched out of Brussels so gallantly twenty-four hours before bearing the colors of the regiment, which he had defended very gallantly upon the field. A French lancer had speared the young Ensign in the leg, who fell still bravely holding to his flag. At the conclusion of the engagement, a place had been found for the poor boy in a cart, and he had been brought back to Brussels.

"Mr. Sedley, Mr. Sedley!" cried the boy faintly, and Jos came up almost frightened at the appeal. He had not at first distinguished who it was who called him.

Little Tom Stubble held out his hot and feeble hand. "I'm to be taken in here," he said. "Osborne—and—and Dobbin said I was, and you are to give the man two napoleons—my mother will pay you." This young fellow's thoughts during the long feverish hours passed in the cart had been wandering to his father's parsonage which he had quitted only a few months before, and he had sometimes forgotten his pain in that delirium.

The hotel was large, and the people kind, and all the inmates of the cart were taken in and placed on various couches. The young Ensign was conveyed upstairs to Osborne's quarters. Amelia and the Major's wife had rushed down to him when the latter had recognized him from the balcony. You may fancy the feelings of these women when they were told that the day was over and both their husbands were safe; in what mute rapture Amelia fell on her good friend's neck and embraced her; in what a grateful passion of prayer she fell on her knees and thanked the Power which had saved her husband.

Our young lady in her fevered and nervous condition could have had no more salutary medicine prescribed for her by any physician than that which chance put in her way. She and Mrs. O'Dowd watched incessantly by the wounded lad, whose pain was very severe, and in the duty thus forced upon her Amelia had not time to brood over her personal anxieties, or to give herself up to her own fears and forebodings after her wont. The young patient told in his simple fashion the events of the day, and the actions of our friends of the gallant —th. They had suffered severely. They had lost very many offi-

cers and men. The Major's horse had been shot under him as the regiment charged, and they all thought that O'Dowd was gone, and that Dobbin had got his majority, until on their return from the charge to their old ground the Major was discovered seated on Pyramus's carcass refreshing himself from a case bottle. It was Captain Osborne that cut down the French lancer who had speared the Ensign. Amelia turned so pale at the notion that Mrs. O'Dowd stopped the young Ensign in this story. And it was Captain Dobbin who at the end of the day, though wounded himself, took up the lad in his arms and carried him to the surgeon, and thence to the cart which was to bring him back to Brussels. And it was he who promised the driver two louis if he would make his way to Mr. Sedley's hotel in the city and tell Mrs. Captain Osborne that the action was over, and that her husband was unhurt and well.

Young Stubble vowed there was not such another officer in the army, and never ceased his praises of the senior Captain, his modesty, his kindness, and his admirable coolness in the field. To these parts of the conversation Amelia lent a very distracted attention. It was only when George was spoken of that she listened, and when he was not mentioned, she thought about him.

In tending her patient, and in thinking of the wonderful escapes of the day before, her second day passed away not too slowly with Amelia. There was only one man in the army for her, and as long as he was well, it must be owned that its movements interested her little. All the reports which Jos brought from the streets fell very vaguely on her ears, though they were sufficient to give that timorous gentleman, and many other people then in Brussels, every disquiet. The French had been repulsed certainly, but it was after a severe and doubtful struggle, and with only a division of the French Army. The Emperor, with the main body, was away at Ligny, where he had utterly annihilated the Prussians and was now free to bring his whole force to bear upon the allies. The Duke of Wellington was retreating upon the capital, and a great battle must be fought under its walls probably, of which the chances were more than doubtful. The Duke of Wellington had but twenty thousand British troops on whom he could rely, for the Germans were raw militia, the Belgians disaffected. And with this handful His Grace had to resist a hundred and fifty thousand men that had broken into Belgium under Napoleon. Under Napoleon! What warrior was there, however famous and skillful, that could fight at odds with him?

After the reception of the previous day, Rebecca did not care to come near her dear Amelia. She clipped the bouquet which George had brought her, and gave fresh water to the flowers, and read over the letter which he had sent her. "Poor wretch," she said, twirling round the little bit of paper in her fingers, "how I could crush her with this!—And it is for a thing like this that she must break her heart, forsooth—for a man who is stupid—a coxcomb—and who does not care for her. My poor good Rawdon is worth ten of this creature." And then she fell to thinking what she should do if—if anything happened to poor good Rawdon, and what a great piece of luck it was that he had left his horses behind.

The next day was a Sunday. And Mrs. Major O'Dowd had the satisfaction

of seeing both her patients refreshed in health and spirits by some rest which they had taken during the night. She herself had slept on a great chair in Amelia's room, ready to wait upon her poor friend or the Ensign should either need her nursing. When morning came, this robust woman went back to the house where she and her Major had their billet, and here performed an elaborate and splendid toilet, befitting the day. And it is very possible that while alone in that chamber, which her husband had inhabited and where his cap still lay on the pillow and his cane stood in the corner, one prayer at least was sent up to Heaven for the welfare of the brave soldier Michael O'Dowd.

They did not hear the noise which disturbed our little congregation at Brussels. Much louder than that which had interrupted them two days previously, as Mrs. O'Dowd was reading the service in her best voice the cannon of Waterloo began to roar.

When Jos heard that dreadful sound, he made up his mind that he would bear this perpetual recurrence of terrors no longer, and would fly at once. He rushed into the sick man's room, where our three friends had paused in their prayers, and further interrupted them by a passionate appeal to Amelia.

"I can't stand it any more, Emmy," he said. "I won't stand it, and you must come with me. I have bought a horse for you—never mind at what price—and you must dress and come with me, and ride behind Isidor."

"Without my husband, Joseph?" Amelia said, with a look of wonder, and gave her hand to the Major's wife. Jos's patience was exhausted.

"Good-by, then," he said, shaking his fist in a rage and slamming the door by which he retreated. And this time he really gave his order for march, and mounted in the courtyard. Mrs. O'Dowd heard the clattering hoofs of the horses as they issued from the gate, and looking on, made many scornful remarks on poor Joseph as he rode down the street with Isidor after him in the laced cap. The horses, which had not been exercised for some days, were lively and sprang about the street. Jos, a clumsy and timid horseman, did not look to advantage in the saddle. "Look at him, Amelia dear, driving into the parlor window. Such a bull in a china shop *I* never saw." And presently the pair of riders disappeared at a canter down the street leading in the direction of the Ghent road, Mrs. O'Dowd pursuing them with a fire of sarcasm so long as they were in sight.

All that day from morning until past sunset the cannon never ceased to roar. It was dark when the cannonading stopped all of a sudden.

All our friends took their share and fought like men in the great field. All day long, while the women were praying ten miles away, the lines of the dauntless English infantry were receiving and repelling the furious charges of the French horsemen. Guns which were heard at Brussels were plowing up their ranks, and comrades falling, and the resolute survivors closing in. Toward evening, the attack of the French, repeated and resisted so bravely, slackened in its fury. They had other foes besides the British to engage, or were preparing for a final onset. It came at last. The columns of the Imperial Guard marched up the hill of Saint-Jean, at length and at once to sweep the English from the height which they had maintained all day, and spite of all. Unscared by the

thunder of the artillery, which hurled death from the English line, the dark rolling column pressed on and up the hill. It seemed almost to crest the eminence when it began to waver and falter. Then it stopped, still facing the shot. Then at last the English troops rushed from the post from which no enemy had been able to dislodge them, and the Guard turned and fled.

No more firing was heard at Brussels—the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city. And Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face dead, with a bullet through his heart.

CHAPTER XXXII

The kind reader must please to remember—while the army is marching from Flanders, and after its heroic actions there, is advancing to take the fortifications on the frontiers of France, previous to an occupation of that country—that there are a number of persons living peaceably in England who have to do with the history at present in hand, and must come in for their share of the chronicle. During the time of these battles and dangers, old Miss Crawley was living at Brighton, very moderately moved by the great events that were going on. The great events rendered the newspapers rather interesting, to be sure, and Briggs read out the *Gazette* in which Rawdon Crawley's gallantry was mentioned with honor, and his promotion was presently recorded.

"What a pity that young man has taken such an irretrievable step in the world!" his aunt said. "With his rank and distinction he might have married a brewer's daughter with a quarter of a million, or have looked to ally himself with the best families in England. He would have had my money some day or other, or his children would—for I'm not in a hurry to go, Miss Briggs, although you may be in a hurry to be rid of me—and instead of that he is a doomed pauper with a dancing girl for a wife."

"Will my dear Miss Crawley not cast an eye of compassion upon the heroic soldier whose name is inscribed in the annals of his country's glory?" said Miss Briggs, who was greatly excited by the Waterloo proceedings, and loved speaking romantically when there was an occasion. "Has not the Captain—or the Colonel as I may now style him—done deeds which make the name of Crawley illustrious?"

"Briggs, you are a fool," said Miss Crawley. "Colonel Crawley has dragged the name of Crawley through the mud, Miss Briggs. Marry a drawing master's daughter, indeed!—marry a dame de compagnie—for she was no better, Briggs, no, she was just what you are—only younger, and a great deal prettier and cleverer. Were you an accomplice of that abandoned wretch, I wonder, of whose vile arts he became a victim and of whom you used to be such an admirer? Yes, I dare say you were an accomplice. But you will find yourself disappointed in my will, I can tell you, and you will have the goodness to write to Mr. Waxy and say that I desire to see him immediately." Miss Crawley was now in the habit of writing to Mr. Waxy, her solicitor, almost every day

in the week, for her arrangements respecting her property were all revoked, and her perplexity was great as to the future disposition of her money.

While thus approaching, as all hoped, to convalescence, Miss Briggs was the only victim admitted into the presence of the invalid; yet Miss Crawley's relatives afar off did not forget their beloved kinswoman, and by a number of tokens, presents, and kind, affectionate messages strove to keep themselves alive in her recollection.

In the first place, let us mention her nephew, Rawdon Crawley. A few weeks after the famous fight at Waterloo, and after the *Gazette* had made known to her the promotion and gallantry of that distinguished officer, the Dieppe packet brought over to Miss Crawley at Brighton a box containing presents and a dutiful letter from the Colonel her nephew. In the box were a pair of French epaulets, a Cross of the Legion of Honor, and the hilt of a sword—relics from the field of battle. And the letter described with a good deal of humor how the latter belonged to a commanding officer of the Guard who, having sworn that "the Guard died, but never surrendered," was taken prisoner the next minute by a private soldier, who broke the Frenchman's sword with the butt of his musket, when Rawdon made himself master of the shattered weapon. As for the Cross and epaulets, they came from a Colonel of French cavalry, who had fallen under the aide-de-camp's arm in the battle, and Rawdon Crawley did not know what better to do with the spoils than to send them to his kindest and most affectionate old friend. Should he continue to write to her from Paris, whither the army was marching? He might be able to give her interesting news from that capital, and of some of Miss Crawley's old friends of the emigration, to whom she had shown so much kindness during their distress.

The spinster caused Briggs to write back to the Colonel a gracious and complimentary letter encouraging him to continue his correspondence. His first letter was so excessively lively and amusing that she should look with pleasure for its successors. "Of course I know," she explained to Miss Briggs, "that Rawdon could not write such a good letter any more than you could, my poor Briggs, and that it is that clever little wretch of a Rebecca who dictates every word to him; but that is no reason why my nephew should not amuse me, and so I wish to let him understand that I am in high good humor."

I wonder whether she knew that it was not only Becky who wrote the letters, but that Mrs. Rawdon actually took and sent home the trophies—which she bought for a few francs from one of the innumerable peddlers who immediately began to deal in relics of the war. The novelist, who knows everything, knows this also. Be this, however, as it may, Miss Crawley's gracious reply greatly encouraged our young friends, Rawdon and his lady, who hoped for the best from their aunt's evidently pacified humor; and they took care to entertain her with many delightful letters from Paris, whither, as Rawdon said, they had the good luck to go in the track of the conquering army.

To the Rector's lady, who went off to tend her husband's broken collarbone at the rectory at Queen's Crawley, the spinster's communications were by no means so gracious. Mrs. Bute, that brisk, managing, lively, imperious woman,

had committed the most fatal of all errors with regard to her sister-in-law. She had not merely oppressed her and her household—she had bored Miss Crawley; and if poor Miss Briggs had been a woman of any spirit, she might have been made happy by the commission which her principal gave her to write a letter to Mrs. Bute Crawley saying that Miss Crawley's health was greatly improved since Mrs. Bute had left her, and begging the latter on no account to put herself to trouble or quit her family for Miss Crawley's sake. This triumph over a lady who had been very haughty and cruel in her behavior to Miss Briggs would have rejoiced most women; but the truth is Briggs was a woman of no spirit at all, and the moment her enemy was discomfited, she began to feel compassion in her favor.

"How silly I was," Mrs. Bute thought, and with reason, "ever to hint that I was coming, as I did in that foolish letter when we sent Miss Crawley the guinea fowls. I ought to have gone without a word to the poor, dear, doting old creature, and taken her out of the hands of that ninny Briggs, and that harpy of a femme de chambre. Oh! Bute, Bute, why did you break your collarbone?"

Why, indeed? We have seen how Mrs. Bute, having the game in her hands, had really played her cards too well. She had ruled over Miss Crawley's household utterly and completely, to be utterly and completely routed when a favorable opportunity for rebellion came. She and her household, however, considered that she had been the victim of horrible selfishness and treason, and that her sacrifices in Miss Crawley's behalf had met with the most savage ingratitude. Rawdon's promotion, and the honorable mention made of his name in the *Gazette*, filled this good Christian lady also with alarm. Would his aunt relent toward him now that he was a Lieutenant Colonel and a C.B.? And would that odious Rebecca once more get into favor? The Rector's wife wrote a sermon for her husband about the vanity of military glory and the prosperity of the wicked, which the worthy parson read in his best voice and without understanding one syllable of it. He had Pitt Crawley for one of his auditors—Pitt, who had come with his two half-sisters to church, which the old Baronet could now by no means be brought to frequent.

Since the departure of Becky Sharp, that old wretch had given himself up entirely to his bad courses, to the great scandal of the county and the mute horror of his son. The ribbons in Miss Horrocks's cap became more splendid than ever. The polite families fled the hall and its owner in terror. Sir Pitt went about tippling at his tenants' houses, and drank rum and water with the farmers at Mudbury and the neighboring places on market days. He drove the family coach and four to Southampton with Miss Horrocks inside, and the county people expected every week, as his son did in speechless agony, that his marriage with her would be announced in the provincial paper.

Meanwhile, as we have said, whatever individual differences there might be between them all, Miss Crawley's dear nephews and nieces were unanimous in loving her and sending her tokens of affection. Thus Mrs. Bute sent guinea fowls and some remarkably fine cauliflowers, and a pretty purse or pincushion worked by her darling girls, who begged to keep a *little* place in the recollec-

tion of their dear aunt, while Mr. Pitt sent peaches and grapes and venison from the hall. The Southampton coach used to carry these tokens of affection to Miss Crawley at Brighton. It used sometimes to convey Mr. Pitt thither too, for his differences with Sir Pitt caused Mr. Crawley to absent himself a good deal from home now, and besides, he had an attraction at Brighton in the person of the Lady Jane Sheepshanks, whose engagement to Mr. Crawley has been formerly mentioned in this history. Her ladyship and her sisters lived at Brighton with their mamma, the Countess Southdown, that strong-minded woman so favorably known in the serious world.

Where meanwhile was he who had been once first favorite for this race for money? Becky and Rawdon, as we have seen, were come together after Waterloo and were passing the winter of 1815 at Paris in great splendor and gaiety. Rebecca was a good economist, and the price poor Jos Sedley had paid for her two horses was in itself sufficient to keep their little establishment afloat for a year at the least. There was no occasion to turn into money "my pistols, the same which I shot Captain Marker," or the gold dressing case, or the cloak lined with sable. Becky had it made into a pelisse for herself, in which she rode in the Bois de Boulogne to the admiration of all, and you should have seen the scene between her and her delighted husband, whom she rejoined after the army had entered Cambray, and when she unsewed herself and let out of her dress all those watches, knickknacks, banknotes, checks, and valuables which she had secreted in the wadding previous to her meditated flight from Brussels! Tufto was charmed, and Rawdon roared with delightful laughter and swore that she was better than any play he ever saw, by Jove. And the way in which she jockeyed Jos, and which she described with infinite fun, carried up his delight to a pitch of quite insane enthusiasm. He believed in his wife as much as the French soldiers in Napoleon.

Meanwhile, she was the gayest and most admired of Englishwomen, and had a little European congress on her reception night. Prussians and Cossacks, Spanish and English—all the world was at Paris during this famous winter. To have seen the stars and cordons in Rebecca's humble saloon would have made all Baker Street pale with envy. Famous warriors rode by her carriage in the Bois, or crowded her modest little box at the Opera. Rawdon was in the highest spirits. There were no duns in Paris as yet, there were parties every day at Véry's or Beauvilliers', play was plentiful and his luck good. Tufto perhaps was sulky. Mrs. Tufto had come over to Paris at her own invitation, and besides this contretemps, there were a score of generals now round Becky's chair, and she might take her choice of a dozen bouquets when she went to the play. Lady Bareacres and the chiefs of the English society, stupid and irreproachable females, writhed with anguish at the success of the little upstart Becky, whose poisoned jokes quivered and rankled in their chaste breasts. But she had all the men on her side. She fought the women with indomitable courage, and they could not talk scandal in any tongue but their own.

So in fêtes, pleasures, and prosperity, the winter of 1815-16 passed away with Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, who accommodated herself to polite life as if her

ancestors had been people of fashion for centuries past—and who from her wit, talent, and energy indeed merited a place of honor in Vanity Fair. In the early spring of 1816, *Galignani's Journal* contained the following announcement in an interesting corner of the paper: "On the 26th of March—the lady of Lieutenant Colonel Crawley of the Life Guards Green—of a son and heir."

This event was copied into the London papers, out of which Miss Briggs read the statement to Miss Crawley at breakfast at Brighton. The intelligence, expected as it might have been, caused a crisis in the affairs of the Crawley family. The spinster's rage rose to its height, and sending instantly for Pitt, her nephew, and for the Lady Southdown from Brunswick Square, she requested an immediate celebration of the marriage which had been so long pending between the two families. And she announced that it was her intention to allow the young couple a thousand a year during her lifetime, at the expiration of which the bulk of her property would be settled upon her nephew and her dear niece, Lady Jane Crawley. Waxy came down to ratify the deeds—Lord Southdown gave away his sister—she was married by a bishop.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The news of the great fights of Quatre-Bras and Waterloo reached England at the same time. The *Gazette* first published the result of the two battles, at which glorious intelligence all England thrilled with triumph and fear. Particulars then followed, and after the announcement of the victories came the list of the wounded and the slain.

The news which that famous *Gazette* brought to the Osbornes gave a dreadful shock to the family and its chief. The girls indulged unrestrained in their grief. The gloom-stricken old father was still more borne down by his fate and sorrow. He strove to think that a judgment was on the boy for his disobedience. He dared not own that the severity of the sentence frightened him, and that its fulfillment had come too soon upon his curses. Sometimes a shuddering terror struck him, as if he had been the author of the doom which he had called down on his son. There was a chance before of a reconciliation. The boy's wife might have died, or he might have come back and said, "Father, I have sinned." But there was no hope now. He stood on the other side of the gulf impassable, haunting his parent with sad eyes.

About three weeks after the eighteenth of June, Mr. Osborne's acquaintance Sir William Dobbin called at Mr. Osborne's house in Russell Square with a very pale and agitated face, and insisted upon seeing that gentleman. Ushered into his room, and after a few words which neither the speaker nor the host understood, the former produced from an enclosure a letter sealed with a large red seal. "My son, Major Dobbin," the Alderman said, with some hesitation, "dispatched me a letter by an officer of the —th, who arrived in town today. My son's letter contains one for you, Osborne." The Alderman placed the letter on the table, and Osborne stared at him for a moment or two in silence. His

looks frightened the ambassador, who, after looking guiltily for a little time at the grief-stricken man, hurried away without another word.

The letter was in George's well-known bold handwriting. It was that one which he had written before daybreak on the sixteenth of June, and just before he took leave of Amelia. The great red seal was emblazoned with the sham coat of arms which Osborne had assumed from the *Peerage*, with *Pax in bello* for a motto—that of the ducal house with which the vain old man tried to fancy himself connected. The hand that signed it would never hold pen or sword more. The very seal that sealed it had been robbed from George's dead body as it lay on the field of battle. The father knew nothing of this, but sat and looked at the letter in terrified vacancy. He almost fell when he went to open it.

The poor boy's letter did not say much. He had been too proud to acknowledge the tenderness which his heart felt. He only said that on the eve of a great battle he wished to bid his father farewell, and solemnly to implore his good offices for the wife—it might be for the child—whom he left behind him. He owned with contrition that his irregularities and his extravagance had already wasted a large part of his mother's little fortune. He thanked his father for his former generous conduct, and he promised him that if he fell on the field or survived it, he would act in a manner worthy of the name of George Osborne.

His English habit, pride, awkwardness, perhaps had prevented him from saying more. His father could not see the kiss George had placed on the superscription of his letter. Mr. Osborne dropped it with the bitterest, deadliest pang of balked affection and revenge. His son was still beloved and unforgiven.

A day came—of almost terrified delight and wonder—when the poor widowed girl pressed a child upon her breast—a child with the eyes of George who was gone—a little boy, as beautiful as a cherub. What a miracle it was to hear its first cry! How she laughed and wept over it—how love, and hope, and prayer woke again in her bosom as the baby nestled there. She was safe. The doctors who attended her, and had feared for her life or for her brain, had waited anxiously for this crisis before they could pronounce that either was secure. It was worth the long months of doubt and dread which the persons who had constantly been with her had passed to see her eyes once more beaming tenderly upon them.

Our friend Dobbin was one of them. It was he who brought her back to England and to her mother's house when Mrs. O'Dowd, receiving a peremptory summons from her Colonel, had been forced to quit her patient. To see Dobbin holding the infant, and to hear Amelia's laugh of triumph as she watched him, would have done any man good who had a sense of humor. William was the godfather of the child, and exerted his ingenuity in the purchase of cups, spoons, pap boats, and corals for this little Christian.

How his mother nursed him, and dressed him, and lived upon him—how she drove away all nurses, and would scarce allow any hand but her own to touch him; how she considered that the greatest favor she could confer upon his

godfather, Major Dobbin, was to allow the Major occasionally to dandle him—need not be told here. This child was her being. Her existence was a maternal caress. She enveloped the feeble and unconscious creature with love and worship. It was her life which the baby drank in from her bosom. Of nights, and when alone, she had stealthy and intense raptures of motherly love such as God's marvelous care has awarded to the female instinct—joys how far higher and lower than reason—blind beautiful devotions which only women's hearts know. It was William Dobbin's task to muse upon these movements of Amelia's, and to watch her heart; and if his love made him divine almost all the feelings which agitated it, alas! he could see with a fatal perspicuity that there was no place there for him. And so, gently, he bore his fate, knowing it and content to bear it.

I suppose Amelia's father and mother saw through the intentions of the Major, and were not ill-disposed to encourage him; for Dobbin visited their house daily and stayed for hours with them, or with Amelia, or with the honest landlord Mr. Clapp and his family. He brought, on one pretext or another, presents to everybody and almost every day, and went with the landlord's little girl, who was rather a favorite with Amelia, by the name of Major Sugarplums. It was this little child who commonly acted as mistress of the ceremonies to introduce him to Mrs. Osborne. She laughed one day when Major Sugarplums' cab drove up to Fulham and he descended from it bringing out a wooden horse, a drum, a trumpet, and other warlike toys for little Georgy, who was scarcely six months old, and for whom the articles in question were entirely premature.

The child was asleep. "Hush," said Amelia, annoyed, perhaps, at the creaking of the Major's boots, and she held out her hand, smiling because William could not take it until he had rid himself of his cargo of toys. "Go downstairs, little Mary," said he presently to the child. "I want to speak to Mrs. Osborne." She looked up rather astonished, and laid down the infant on its bed.

"I am come to say good-by, Amelia," said he, taking her slender little white hand gently.

"Good-by? And where are you going?" she said with a smile.

"Send the letters to the agents," he said. "They will forward them—for you will write to me, won't you? I shall be away a long time."

"I'll write to you about Georgy," she said. "Dear William, how good you have been to him and to me. Look at him. Isn't he like an angel?"

The little pink hands of the child closed mechanically round the honest soldier's fingers and Amelia looked up in his face with bright maternal pleasure. The cruelest looks could not have wounded him more than that glance of hopeless kindness. He bent over the child and mother. He could not speak for a moment. And it was only with all his strength that he could force himself to say a God bless you. "God bless you," said Amelia, and held up her face and kissed him.

"Hush! Don't wake Georgy!" she added as William Dobbin went to the door with heavy steps. She did not hear the noise of his cab wheels as he drove away; she was looking at the child, who was laughing in his sleep.

CHAPTER XXXIV

On nothing per annum, then, and during a course of some two or three years, of which we can afford to give but a very brief history, Crawley and his wife lived very happily and comfortably in Paris. It was in this period that he quitted the Guards and sold out of the army. When we find him again, his mustachios and the title of Colonel on his card are the only relics of his military profession.

It has been mentioned that Rebecca soon after her arrival in Paris took a very smart and leading position in the society of that capital, and was welcomed at some of the most distinguished houses of the restored French nobility. The Englishmen of fashion in Paris courted her, too, to the disgust of the ladies their wives, who could not bear the parvenue. For some months the salons of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, in which her place was secured, and the splendors of the new Court, where she was received with much distinction, delighted and perhaps a little intoxicated Mrs. Crawley, who may have been disposed during this period of elation to slight the people—honest young military men mostly—who formed her husband's chief society.

But the Colonel yawned sadly among the duchesses and great ladies of the Court. The old women who played écarté made such a noise about a five-franc piece that it was not worth Colonel Crawley's while to sit down at a card table. The wit of their conversation he could not appreciate, being ignorant of their language. And what good could his wife get, he urged, by making curtsies every night to a whole circle of princesses? He left Rebecca presently to frequent these parties alone, resuming his own simple pursuits and amusements among the amiable friends of his own choice.

The truth is, when we say of a gentleman that he lives elegantly on nothing a year, we use the word "nothing" to signify something unknown—meaning simply that we don't know how the gentleman in question defrays the expenses of his establishment. Now our friend the Colonel had a great aptitude for all games of chance, and exercising himself, as he continually did, with the cards, the dice box, or the cue, it is natural to suppose that he attained a much greater skill in the use of these articles than men can possess who only occasionally handle them. To use a cue at billiards well is like using a pencil, or a German flute, or a smallsword—you cannot master any one of these implements at first, and it is only by repeated study and perseverance, joined to a natural taste, that a man can excel in the handling of either. Now Crawley from being only a brilliant amateur had grown to be a consummate master of billiards. Like a great general, his genius used to rise with the danger, and when the luck had been unfavorable to him for a whole game, and the bets were consequently against him, he would, with consummate skill and boldness, make some prodigious hits which would restore the battle, and come in a victor at the end, to the astonishment of everybody—of everybody, that is, who was a stranger

to his play. Those who were accustomed to see it were cautious how they staked their money against a man of such sudden resources and brilliant and overpowering skill.

At games of cards he was equally skillful; for though he would constantly lose money at the commencement of an evening, playing so carelessly and making such blunders that newcomers were often inclined to think meanly of his talent, yet when roused to action and awakened to caution by repeated small losses, it was remarked that Crawley's play became quite different, and that he was pretty sure of beating his enemy thoroughly before the night was over. Indeed, very few men could say that they ever had the better of him.

His successes were so repeated that no wonder the envious and the vanquished spoke sometimes with bitterness regarding them. And as the French say of the Duke of Wellington, who never suffered a defeat, that only an astonishing series of lucky accidents enabled him to be an invariable winner, yet even they allow that he cheated at Waterloo and was enabled to win the last great trick—so it was hinted at headquarters in England that some foul play must have taken place in order to account for the continuous successes of Colonel Crawley.

Though Frascati's and the Salon were open at that time in Paris, the mania for play was so widely spread that the public gambling rooms did not suffice for the general ardor, and gambling went on in private houses as much as if there had been no public means for gratifying the passion. At Crawley's charming little *réunions* of an evening this fatal amusement commonly was practiced—much to good-natured little Mrs. Crawley's annoyance. She spoke about her husband's passion for dice with the deepest grief, she bewailed it to everybody who came to her house. She besought the young fellows never, never to touch a box; and when young Green of the Rifles lost a very considerable sum of money, Rebecca passed a whole night in tears, as the servant told the unfortunate young gentleman, and actually went on her knees to her husband to beseech him to remit the debt and burn the acknowledgment. How could he? He had lost just as much himself to Blackstone of the Hussars, and Count Punter of the Hanoverian Cavalry. Green might have any decent time, but pay?—Of course he must pay, to talk of burning I O U's was child's play.

But in spite of Rawdon's undoubted skill and constant successes, it became evident to Rebecca, considering these things, that their position was but a precarious one, and that even although they paid scarcely anybody, their little capital would end one day by dwindling into zero. "Gambling," she would say, "dear, is good to help your income, but not as an income itself. Someday people may be tired of play, and then where are we?" Rawdon acquiesced in the justice of her opinion, and in truth he had remarked that after a few nights of his little suppers, etc., gentlemen *were* tired of play with him, and in spite of Rebecca's charms, did not present themselves very eagerly.

Easy and pleasant as their life at Paris was, it was after all only an idle dalliance and amiable trifling, and Rebecca saw that she must push Rawdon's fortune in their own country. She must get him a place or appointment at home or in the colonies, and she determined to make a move upon England as soon

as the way could be cleared for her. As a first step she had made Crawley sell out of the Guards and go on half-pay. His function as aide-de-camp to General Tufto had ceased previously. Rebecca laughed in all companies at that officer, at his toupee (which he mounted on coming to Paris), at his waistband, at his false teeth, at his pretensions to be a lady-killer above all, and his absurd vanity in fancying every woman whom he came near was in love with him. It was to Mrs. Brent, the beetle-browed wife of Mr. Commissary Brent, to whom the General transferred his attentions now—his bouquets, his dinners at the restaurateurs', his opera boxes, and his knickknacks. Poor Mrs. Tufto was no more happy than before, and still had to pass long evenings alone with her daughters, knowing that her General was gone off scented and curled to stand behind Mrs. Brent's chair at the play. Becky had a dozen admirers in his place, to be sure, and could cut her rival to pieces with her wit. But, as we have said, she was growing tired of this idle, social life. Opera boxes and restaurateur dinners palled upon her, nosegays could not be laid by as a provision for future years, and she could not live upon knickknacks, laced handkerchiefs, and kid gloves. She felt the frivolity of pleasure, and longed for more substantial benefits.

At this juncture news arrived which spread among the many creditors of the Colonel at Paris, and which caused them great satisfaction. Miss Crawley, the rich aunt from whom he expected his immense inheritance, was dying—the Colonel must haste to her bedside. Mrs. Crawley and her child would remain behind until he came to reclaim them. He departed for Calais, and having reached that place in safety, it might have been supposed that he went to Dover; but instead he took the diligence to Dunkirk and thence traveled to Brussels, for which place he had a former predilection. The fact is, he owed more money at London than at Paris, and he preferred the quiet little Belgian city to either of the more noisy capitals.

Her aunt was dead. Mrs. Crawley ordered the most intense mourning for herself and little Rawdon. The Colonel was busy arranging the affairs of the inheritance. They could take the *premier* now, instead of the little entresol of the hotel which they occupied. Mrs. Crawley and the landlord had a consultation about the new hangings, an amicable wrangle about the carpets, and a final adjustment of everything except the bill. She went off in one of his carriages, her French bonne with her, the child by her side—the admirable landlord and landlady smiling farewell to her from the gate.

But before she went to join her husband in the Belgic capital, Mrs. Crawley made an expedition into England, leaving behind her her little son upon the Continent, under the care of her French maid.

The parting between Rebecca and the little Rawdon did not cause either party much pain. She had not, to say truth, seen much of the young gentleman since his birth. After the amiable fashion of French mothers, she had placed him out at nurse in a village in the neighborhood of Paris, where little Rawdon passed the first months of his life, not unhappily, with a numerous family of foster brothers in wooden shoes. His father would ride over many a time to see him here, and the elder Rawdon's paternal heart glowed to see him rosy

and dirty, shouting lustily, and happy in the making of mud pies under the superintendence of the gardener's wife, his nurse.

Rebecca did not care much to go and see the son and heir. Once he spoiled a new dove-colored pelisse of hers. He preferred his nurse's caresses to his mamma's, and when finally he quitted that jolly nurse and almost parent, he cried loudly for hours. He was only consoled by his mother's promise that he should return to his nurse the next day; indeed the nurse herself, who probably would have been pained at the parting too, was told that the child would immediately be restored to her, and for some time waited quite anxiously his return.

Rebecca's object in her journey to London was to effect a kind of compromise with her husband's numerous creditors, and by offering them a dividend of ninepence or a shilling in the pound, to secure a return for him into his own country. It does not become us to trace the steps which she took in the conduct of this most difficult negotiation, but having shown them to their satisfaction that the sum which she was empowered to offer was all her husband's available capital, and having convinced them that Colonel Crawley would prefer a perpetual retirement on the Continent to a residence in this country with his debts unsettled—having proved to them that there was no possibility of money accruing to him from other quarters, and no earthly chance of their getting a larger dividend than that which she was empowered to offer—she brought the Colonel's creditors unanimously to accept her proposals, and purchased with fifteen hundred pounds of ready money more than ten times that amount of debts.

Mrs. Crawley employed no lawyer in the transaction. The matter was so simple, to have or to leave, as she justly observed, that she made the lawyers of the creditors themselves do the business. And Mr. Lewis, representing Mr. Davids of Red Lion Square, and Mr. Moss, acting for Mr. Manasseh of Cursitor Street (chief creditors of the Colonel's), complimented his lady upon the brilliant way in which she did business, and declared that there was no professional man who could beat her.

Rebecca received their congratulations with perfect modesty, ordered a bottle of sherry and a bread cake to the little dingy lodgings where she dwelt while conducting the business, to treat the enemy's lawyers, shook hands with them at parting in excellent good humor, and returned straightway to the Continent to rejoin her husband and son, and acquaint the former with the glad news of his entire liberation.

And so Colonel and Mrs. Crawley came to London, and it is at their house in Curzon Street, Mayfair that they really showed the skill which must be possessed by those who would live on the resources above-named.

CHAPTER XXXV

In the first place, and as a matter of the greatest necessity, we are bound to describe how a house may be got for nothing a year. These mansions are

to be had either unfurnished, where, if you have credit with Messrs. Gillows or Bantings, you can get them splendidly *montées* and decorated entirely according to your own fancy; or they are to be let furnished—a less troublesome and complicated arrangement to most parties. It was so that Crawley and his wife preferred to hire their house.

Before Mr. Bowls came to preside over Miss Crawley's house and cellar in Park Lane, that lady had had for a butler a Mr. Raggles, who was born on the family estate of Queen's Crawley, and indeed was a younger son of a gardener there. By good conduct, a handsome person and calves, and a grave demeanor, Raggles rose from the knifeboard to the footboard of the carriage, from the footboard to the butler's pantry. When he had been a certain number of years at the head of Miss Crawley's establishment, where he had had good wages, fat perquisites, and plenty of opportunities of saving, he announced that he was about to contract a matrimonial alliance with a late cook of Miss Crawley's, who had subsisted in an honorable manner by the exercise of a mangle and the keeping of a small greengrocer's shop in the neighborhood.

Mr. Raggles then retired and personally undertook the superintendence of the small shop and the greens. He added milk and cream, eggs and country-fed pork, to his stores, contenting himself, while other retired butlers were vending spirits in public houses, by dealing in the simplest country produce. And having a good connection among the butlers in the neighborhood, and a snug back parlor where he and Mrs. Raggles received them, his milk, cream, and eggs got to be adopted by many of the fraternity, and his profits increased every year. Year after year he quietly and modestly amassed money, and when at length that snug and complete bachelor's residence at No. 201 Curzon Street, Mayfair, lately the residence of the Honorable Frederick Deuceace, gone abroad, with its rich and appropriate furniture by the first makers, was brought to the hammer, who should go in and purchase the lease and furniture of the house but Charles Raggles! A part of the money he borrowed, it is true, and at rather a high interest, from a brother butler.

Of course they did not intend to occupy permanently an apartment so splendid. It was in order to let the house again that Raggles purchased it. As soon as a tenant was found he subsided into the greengrocer's shop once more; but a happy thing it was for him to walk out of that tenement and into Curzon Street and there survey his house—his own house—with geraniums in the window and a carved bronze knocker.

Raggles loved and adored the Crawley family as the author of all his prosperity in life. He had a silhouette of his mistress in his back shop, and a drawing of the porter's lodge at Queen's Crawley, done by that spinster herself in India ink—and the only addition he made to the decorations of the Curzon Street house was a print of Queen's Crawley in Hampshire, the seat of Sir Walpole Crawley, Baronet, who was represented in a gilded car drawn by six white horses and passing by a lake covered with swans and barges containing ladies in hoops and musicians with flags and periwigs. Indeed, Raggles thought there was no such palace in all the world, and no such august family.

As luck would have it, Raggles's house in Curzon Street was to let when

Rawdon and his wife returned to London. The Colonel knew it and its owner quite well; the latter's connection with the Crawley family had been kept up constantly, for Raggles helped Mr. Bowls whenever Miss Crawley received friends. And the old man not only let his house to the Colonel, but officiated as his butler whenever he had company, Mrs. Raggles operating in the kitchen below and sending up dinners of which old Miss Crawley herself might have approved. This was the way, then, Crawley got his house for nothing; for though Raggles had to pay taxes and rates, and the interest of the mortgage to the brother butler, and the insurance of his life, and the charges for his children at school, and the value of the meat and drink which his own family—and for a time that of Colonel Crawley too—consumed, and though the poor wretch was utterly ruined by the transaction, his children being flung on the streets and himself driven into the Fleet Prison, yet somebody must pay even for gentlemen who live for nothing a year, and so it was this unlucky Raggles who was made the representative of Colonel Crawley's defective capital.

Rawdon and his wife generously gave their patronage to all such of Miss Crawley's tradesmen and purveyors as chose to serve them. Some were willing enough, especially the poor ones. It was wonderful to see the pertinacity with which the washerwoman from Tooting brought the cart every Saturday, and her bills week after week. Mr. Raggles himself had to supply the greengroceries. The bill for servants' porter at the Fortune of War public house is a curiosity in the chronicles of beer. Every servant also was owed the greater part of his wages, and thus kept up perforce an interest in the house. Nobody, in fact, was paid. Not the blacksmith who opened the lock, nor the glazier who mended the pane, nor the jobber who let the carriage, nor the groom who drove it, nor the butcher who provided the leg of mutton, nor the coals which roasted it, nor the cook who basted it, nor the servants who ate it. And this I am given to understand is not infrequently the way in which people live elegantly on nothing a year.

Rebecca's wit, cleverness, and flippancy made her speedily the vogue in London among a certain class. You saw demure chariots at her door out of which stepped very great people. You beheld her carriage in the Park surrounded by dandies of note. The little box in the third tier of the Opera was crowded with heads constantly changing. But it must be confessed that the ladies held aloof from her, and that their doors were shut to our little adventurer.

Now the few female acquaintances whom Mrs. Crawley had known abroad not only declined to visit her when she came to this side of the Channel, but cut her severely when they met in public places. It was curious to see how the great ladies forgot her, and no doubt not altogether a pleasant study to Rebecca.

Rawdon at first felt very acutely the slights which were passed upon his wife, and was inclined to be gloomy and savage. He talked of calling out the husbands or brothers of every one of the insolent women who did not pay a proper respect to his wife; and it was only by the strongest commands and entreaties on her part that he was brought into keeping a decent behavior. "You can't shoot me into society," she said good-naturedly. "Remember, my

dear, that I was but a governess, and you, you poor silly old man, have the worst reputation for debt, and dice, and all sorts of wickedness. We shall get quite as many friends as we want by-and-by, and in the meanwhile you must be a good boy and obey your schoolmistress in everything she tells you to do. When we heard that your aunt had left almost everything to Pitt and his wife, do you remember what a rage you were in? You would have told all Paris if I had not made you keep your temper, and where would you have been now?—In prison at Sainte-Pélagie for debt, and not established in London in a handsome house with every comfort about you. You were in such a fury you were ready to murder your brother, you wicked Cain you, and what good would have come of remaining angry? All the rage in the world won't get us your aunt's money, and it is much better that we should be friends with your brother's family than enemies, as those foolish Butes are. When your father dies, Queen's Crawley will be a pleasant house for you and me to pass the winter in. If we are ruined, you can carve and take charge of the stable and I can be a governess to Lady Jane's children. Ruined! Fiddlesticks! I will get you a good place before that, or Pitt and his little boy will die and we will be Sir Rawdon and my lady. While there is life there is hope, my dear, and I intend to make a man of you yet. Who sold your horses for you? Who paid your debts for you?" Rawdon was obliged to confess that he owed all these benefits to his wife, and to trust himself to her guidance for the future.

Indeed when Miss Crawley quitted the world, and that money for which all her relatives had been fighting so eagerly was finally left to Pitt, Bute Crawley, who found that only five thousand pounds had been left to him instead of the twenty upon which he calculated, was in such a fury at his disappointment that he vented it in savage abuse upon his nephew, and the quarrel always rankling between them ended in an utter breach of intercourse. Rawdon Crawley's conduct, on the other hand, who got but a hundred pounds, was such as to astonish his brother and delight his sister-in-law, who was disposed to look kindly upon all the members of her husband's family. He wrote to his brother a very frank, manly, good-humored letter from Paris. He was aware, he said, that by his own marriage he had forfeited his aunt's favor, and though he did not disguise his disappointment that she should have been so entirely relentless toward him, he was glad that the money was still kept in their branch of the family and heartily congratulated his brother on his good fortune. He sent his affectionate remembrances to his sister, and hoped to have her goodwill for Mrs. Rawdon, and the letter concluded with a postscript to Pitt in the latter lady's own handwriting. She too begged to join in her husband's congratulations. She should ever remember Mr. Crawley's kindness to her in early days when she was a friendless orphan, the instructress of his little sisters, in whose welfare she still took the tenderest interest. She wished him every happiness in his married life, and, asking his permission to offer her remembrances to Lady Jane (of whose goodness all the world informed her), she hoped that one day she might be allowed to present her little boy to his uncle and aunt, and begged to bespeak him for their goodwill and protection.

Pitt Crawley received this communication very graciously—more graciously

than Miss Crawley had received some of Rebecca's previous compositions in Rawdon's handwriting. And as for Lady Jane, she was so charmed with the letter that she expected her husband would instantly divide his aunt's legacy into two equal portions and send off one half to his brother at Paris.

To her ladyship's surprise, however, Pitt declined to accommodate his brother with a check for thirty thousand pounds. But he made Rawdon a handsome offer of his hand whenever the latter should come to England and choose to take it. And, thanking Mrs. Crawley for her good opinion of himself and Lady Jane, he graciously pronounced his willingness to take any opportunity to serve her little boy.

Thus an almost reconciliation was brought about between the brothers. When Rebecca came to town, Pitt and his wife were not in London. Many a time she drove by the old door in Park Lane to see whether they had taken possession of Miss Crawley's house there. But the new family did not make its appearance. It was only through Raggles that she heard of their movements—how Miss Crawley's domestics had been dismissed with decent gratuities, and how Mr. Pitt had only once made his appearance in London, when he stopped for a few days at the house, did business with his lawyers there, and sold off all Miss Crawley's French novels to a bookseller out of Bond Street. Becky had reasons of her own which caused her to long for the arrival of her new relation. "When Lady Jane comes," thought she, "she shall be my sponsor in London society, and as for the women, bah! the women will ask me when they find the men want to see me."

"Rawdon," said Becky very late one night, as a party of gentlemen were seated round her crackling drawing-room fire (for the men came to her house to finish the night, and she had ice and coffee for them, the best in London), "I must have a sheep dog."

"A what?" said Rawdon, looking up from an écarté table.

"A sheep dog!" said young Lord Southdown. "My dear Mrs. Crawley, what a fancy! Why not have a Danish dog? I know of one as big as a camelleopard, by Jove. It would almost pull your brougham. Or a Persian greyhound, eh? (I propose, if you please.) Or a little pug that would go into one of Lord Steyne's snuffboxes? There's a man at Bayswater got one with such a nose that you might—I mark the king and play—that you might hang your hat on it."

"I mark the trick," Rawdon gravely said. He attended to his game commonly, and didn't much meddle with the conversation except when it was about horses and betting.

"What *can* you want with a shepherd's dog?" the lively little Southdown continued.

"I mean a *moral* shepherd's dog," said Becky, laughing and looking up at Lord Steyne.

"What the devil's that?" said his lordship.

"A dog to keep the wolves off me," Rebecca continued. "A companion."

"Dear little innocent lamb, you want one," said the Marquis, and his jaw thrust out and he began to grin hideously, his little eyes leering toward Rebecca.

The great Lord of Steyne was standing by the fire sipping coffee. The fire crackled and blazed pleasantly. There was a score of candles sparkling round the mantelpiece in all sorts of quaint sconces of gilt and bronze and porcelain. They lighted up Rebecca's figure to admiration as she sat on a sofa covered with a pattern of gaudy flowers. She was in a pink dress that looked as fresh as a rose; her dazzling white arms and shoulders were half-covered with a thin hazy scarf through which they sparkled; her hair hung in curls round her neck; one of her little feet peeped out from the fresh crisp folds of the silk—the prettiest little foot in the prettiest little sandal in the finest silk stocking in the world.

The candles lighted up Lord Steyne's shining bald head, which was fringed with red hair. He had thick bushy eyebrows, with little twinkling bloodshot eyes surrounded by a thousand wrinkles. His jaw was underhung, and when he laughed, two white buckteeth protruded themselves and glistened savagely in the midst of the grin. He had been dining with royal personages, and wore his Garter and ribbon. A short man was his lordship, broad-chested and bow-legged, but proud of the fineness of his foot and ankle, and always caressing his Garter knee.

Rawdon and his friend meanwhile played écarté until they had enough. The Colonel won, but say that he won ever so much and often, nights like these, which occurred many times in the week—his wife having all the talk and all the admiration, and he sitting silent without the circle, not comprehending a word of the jokes, the allusions, the mystical language within—must have been rather wearisome to the ex-dragoon.

"How is Mrs. Crawley's husband?" Lord Steyne used to say to him by way of a good day when they met, and indeed that was now his avocation in life. He was Colonel Crawley no more. He was Mrs. Crawley's husband.

About the little Rawdon, if nothing has been said all this while, it is because he is hidden upstairs in a garret somewhere, or has crawled below into the kitchen for companionship. His mother scarcely ever took notice of him. He passed the days with his French bonne as long as that domestic remained in Mr. Crawley's family, and when the Frenchwoman went away, the little fellow, howling in the loneliness of the night, had compassion taken on him by a housemaid, who took him out of his solitary nursery into her bed in the garret hard by and comforted him.

Rebecca, my Lord Steyne, and one or two more were in the drawing-room taking tea after the opera when his shouting was heard overhead. "It's my cherub crying for his nurse," she said. She did not offer to move to go and see the child. "Don't agitate your feelings by going to look for him," said Lord Steyne sardonically. "Bah," replied the other, with a sort of blush, "he'll cry himself to sleep!" And they fell to talking about the opera.

Now Rawdon Crawley, rascal as the Colonel was, had certain manly tendencies of affection in his heart, and could love a child and a woman still. For Rawdon Minor he had a great secret tenderness, then, which did not escape Rebecca, though she did not talk about it to her husband. It did not annoy her—she was too good-natured. It only increased her scorn for him. He felt

somehow ashamed of this paternal softness, and hid it from his wife—only indulging in it when alone with the boy.

Rebecca was fond of her husband. She was always perfectly good-humored and kind to him. She did not even show her scorn much for him; perhaps she liked him the better for being a fool. He was her upper servant and maître d'hôtel. He went on her errands, obeyed her orders without question, drove in the carriage in the Ring with her without repining, took her to the opera box, solaced himself at his club during the performance, and came punctually back to fetch her when due. He would have liked her to be a little fonder of the boy, but even to that he reconciled himself. "Hang it, you know she's so clever," he said, "and I'm not literary and that, you know." For, as we have said before, it requires no great wisdom to be able to win at cards and billiards, and Rawdon made no pretensions to any other sort of skill.

When the companion came, his domestic duties became very light. His wife encouraged him to dine abroad, she would let him off duty at the opera. "Don't stay and stupefy yourself at home tonight, my dear," she would say. "Some men are coming who will only bore you. I would not ask them, but you know it's for your good, and now I have a sheep dog, I need not be afraid to be alone."

"A sheep dog—a companion! Becky Sharp with a companion! Isn't it good fun?" thought Mrs. Crawley to herself. The notion tickled hugely her sense of humor.

One Sunday morning, as Rawdon Crawley, his little son, and the pony were taking their accustomed walk in the Park, they passed by an old acquaintance of the Colonel's, Corporal Clink of the regiment, who was in conversation with a friend, an old gentleman, who held a boy in his arms about the age of little Rawdon. This other youngster had seized hold of the Waterloo medal which the Corporal wore and was examining it with delight.

"Good morning, your Honor," said Clink, in reply to the "How do, Clink?" of the Colonel. "This ere young gentleman is about the little Colonel's age, sir," continued the Corporal.

"His father was a Waterloo man, too," said the old gentleman who carried the boy. "Wasn't he, Georgy?"

"Yes," said Georgy. He and the little chap on the pony were looking at each other with all their might—solemnly scanning each other as children do.

"In a line regiment," Clink said, with a patronizing air.

"He was a Captain in the —th regiment," said the old gentleman rather pompously. "Captain George Osborne, sir—perhaps you knew him. He died the death of a hero, sir, fighting against the Corsican tyrant."

Colonel Crawley blushed quite red. "I knew him very well, sir," he said, "and his wife, his dear little wife, sir—how is she?"

"She is my daughter, sir," said the old gentleman, putting down the boy and taking out a card with great solemnity, which he handed to the Colonel. On it was written:

"Mr. Sedley, Sole Agent for the Black Diamond and Anti-Cinder Coal Association, Bunker's Wharf, Thames Street, and Anna-Maria Cottages, Fulham Road West."

Little Georgy went up and looked at the Shetland pony.

"Should you like to have a ride?" said Rawdon Minor from the saddle.

"Yes," said Georgy. The Colonel, who had been looking at him with some interest, took up the child and put him on the pony behind Rawdon Minor.

"Take hold of him, Georgy," he said. "Take my little boy round the waist—his name is Rawdon." And both the children began to laugh.

"You won't see a prettier pair, I think, *this* summer's day, sir," said the good-natured Corporal, and the Colonel, the Corporal, and old Mr. Sedley with his umbrella walked by the side of the children.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Our worthy fat friend Joseph Sedley returned to India not long after his escape from Brussels. Either his furlough was up, or he dreaded to meet any witnesses of his Waterloo flight. However it might be, he went back to his duties in Bengal very soon after Napoleon had taken up his residence at St. Helena, where Jos saw the ex-Emperor. To hear Mr. Sedley talk on board ship you would have supposed that it was not the first time he and the Corsican had met, and that the civilian had bearded the French General at Mount Saint John. He had a thousand anecdotes about the famous battles, he knew the position of every regiment, and the loss which each had incurred. He did not deny that he had been concerned in those victories—that he had been with the army, and carried dispatches for the Duke of Wellington. And he described what the Duke did and said on every conceivable moment of the day at Waterloo, with such an accurate knowledge of His Grace's sentiments and proceedings that it was clear he must have been by the conqueror's side throughout the day—though as a noncombatant his name was not mentioned in the public documents relative to the battle. Perhaps he actually worked himself up to believe that he had been engaged with the army; certain it is that he made a prodigious sensation for some time at Calcutta, and was called Waterloo Sedley during the whole of his subsequent stay in Bengal.

The bills which Jos had given for the purchase of those unlucky horses were paid without question by him and his agents. He never was heard to allude to the bargain, and nobody knows for a certainty what became of the horses, or how he got rid of them or of Isidor, his Belgian servant, who sold a gray horse very like the one which Jos rode, at Valenciennes some time during the autumn of 1815.

Jos's London agents had orders to pay one hundred and twenty pounds yearly to his parents at Fulham. It was the chief support of the old couple, for Mr. Sedley's speculations in life subsequent to his bankruptcy did not by any means retrieve the broken old gentleman's fortune. He tried to be a wine merchant, a coal merchant, a commission lottery agent, etc., etc. He sent round prospectuses to his friends whenever he took a new trade, and ordered a new brass plate for the door, and talked pompously about making his fortune still.

But Fortune never came back to the feeble and stricken old man. One by one his friends dropped off, and were weary of buying dear coals and bad wine from him.

On Sundays, for "business" prevented him on weekdays from taking such a pleasure, it was old Sedley's delight to take out his little grandson Georgy to the neighboring parks or Kensington Gardens, to see the soldiers or to feed the ducks. Georgy loved the redcoats, and his grandpapa told him how his father had been a famous soldier, and introduced him to many sergeants and others with Waterloo medals on their breasts, to whom the old grandfather pompously presented the child as the son of Captain Osborne of the —th, who died gloriously on the glorious eighteenth. He has been known to treat some of these noncommissioned gentlemen to a glass of porter, and indeed in their first Sunday walks was disposed to spoil little Georgy, sadly gorging the boy with apples and parliament, to the detriment of his health—until Amelia declared that George should never go out with Grandpapa unless the latter promised solemnly, and on his honor, not to give the child any cakes, lollipops, or stall produce whatever.

Besides her pension of fifty pounds a year, there had been five hundred pounds, as her husband's executor stated, left in the agent's hands at the time of Osborne's demise, which sum, as George's guardian, Dobbin proposed to put out at 8 per cent in an Indian house of agency. Mr. Sedley, who thought the Major had some roguish intentions of his own about the money, was strongly against this plan. He went to the agents to protest personally against the employment of the money in question, when he learned, to his surprise, that there had been no such sum in their hands, that all the late Captain's assets did not amount to a hundred pounds, and that the five hundred pounds in question must be a separate sum, of which Major Dobbin knew the particulars. More than ever convinced that there was some roguery, old Sedley pursued the Major. As his daughter's nearest friend, he demanded with a high hand a statement of the late Captain's accounts. Dobbin's stammering, blushing, and awkwardness added to the other's convictions that he had a rogue to deal with, and in a majestic tone he told that officer a piece of his mind, as he called it, simply stating his belief that the Major was unlawfully detaining his late son-in-law's money.

Dobbin at this lost all patience, and if his accuser had not been so old and so broken, a quarrel might have ensued between them at the Slaughters' Coffee-house, in a box of which place of entertainment the gentlemen had their colloquy. "Come upstairs, sir," lisped out the Major. "I insist on your coming up the stairs, and I will show which is the injured party, poor George or I." And dragging the old gentleman up to his bedroom, he produced from his desk Osborne's accounts, and a bundle of I O U's which the latter had given—who, to do him justice, was always ready to give an I O U. "He paid his bills in England," Dobbin added, "but he had not a hundred pounds in the world when he fell. I and one or two of his brother officers made up the little sum, which was all that we could spare, and you dare tell us that we are trying to cheat the widow and the orphan." Sedley was very contrite and humbled, though

the fact is that William Dobbin had told a great falsehood to the old gentleman, having himself given every shilling of the money, having buried his friend and paid all the fees and charges incident upon the calamity and removal of poor Amelia.

Sometimes, too, and by the Major's desire no doubt, his sisters, the Misses Dobbin, would call in the family carriage to take Amelia and the little boy for a drive if they were so inclined. The patronage and kindness of these ladies was very uncomfortable to Amelia, but she bore it meekly enough, for her nature was to yield—and besides, the carriage and its splendors gave little Georgy immense pleasure. The ladies begged occasionally that the child might pass a day with them, and he was always glad to go to that fine garden house at Denmark Hill where they lived, and where there were such fine grapes in the hothouses and peaches on the walls.

One day they kindly came over to Amelia with news which they were *sure* would delight her—something *very* interesting about their dear William.

What was it—was he coming home? she asked with pleasure beaming in her eyes.

Oh, no—not the least—but they had very good reason to believe that dear William was about to be married—and to a relation of a very dear friend of Amelia's—to Miss Glorvina O'Dowd, Sir Michael O'Dowd's sister, who had gone out to join Lady O'Dowd at Madras—a very beautiful and accomplished girl, everybody said.

Amelia said "Oh!" Amelia was very, *very* happy indeed. But she supposed Glorvina could not be like her old acquaintance, who was most kind—but—but she was very happy indeed. And by some impulse of which I cannot explain the meaning, she took George in her arms and kissed him with an extraordinary tenderness. Her eyes were quite moist when she put the child down, and she scarcely spoke a word during the whole of the drive—though she was so very happy indeed.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Our duty now takes us back for a brief space to some old Hampshire acquaintances of ours, whose hopes respecting the disposal of their rich kinswoman's property were so woefully disappointed. After counting upon thirty thousand pounds from his sister, it was a heavy blow to Bute Crawley to receive but five, out of which sum, when he had paid his own debts and those of Jim, his son at college, a very small fragment remained to portion off his four plain daughters. Mrs. Bute never knew, or at least never acknowledged, how far her own tyrannous behavior had tended to ruin her husband. All that woman could do she vowed and protested she had done. Was it her fault if she did not possess those sycophantic arts which her hypocritical nephew, Pitt Crawley, practiced? She wished him all the happiness which he merited out of his ill-gotten gains. "At least the money will remain in the family," she said charitably. "Pitt will never spend it, my dear, that is quite certain; for a greater miser does

not exist in England, and he is as odious, though in a different way, as his spendthrift brother, the abandoned Rawdon."

So Mrs. Bute, after the first shock of rage and disappointment, began to accommodate herself as best she could to her altered fortunes, and to save and retrench with all her might. She instructed her daughters how to bear poverty cheerfully, and invented a thousand notable methods to conceal or evade it. She took them about to balls and public places in the neighborhood with praiseworthy energy—nay, she entertained her friends in a hospitable, comfortable manner at the rectory, and much more frequently than before dear Miss Crawley's legacy had fallen in. From her outward bearing nobody would have supposed that the family had been disappointed in their expectations, or have guessed from her frequent appearance in public how she pinched and starved at home.

Between such a woman and her brother-in-law, the odious Baronet at the hall, it is manifest that there could be very little in common. The rupture between Bute and his brother Sir Pitt was complete—indeed, between Sir Pitt and the whole county, to which the old man was a scandal. His dislike for respectable society increased with age, and the lodge gates had not opened to a gentleman's carriage wheels since Pitt and Lady Jane came to pay their visit of duty after their marriage.

That was an awful and unfortunate visit, never to be thought of by the family without horror. Pitt begged his wife, with a ghastly countenance, never to speak of it, and it was only through Mrs. Bute herself, who still knew everything which took place at the hall, that the circumstances of Sir Pitt's reception of his son and daughter-in-law were ever known at all.

As they drove up the avenue of the park in their neat and well-appointed carriage, Pitt remarked with dismay and wrath great gaps among the trees—his trees—which the old Baronet was felling entirely without license. The park wore an aspect of utter dreariness and ruin. The drives were ill-kept, and the neat carriage splashed and floundered in muddy pools along the road. The great sweep in front of the terrace and entrance stair was black and covered with mosses, the once trim flower beds rank and weedy. Shutters were up along almost the whole line of the house; the great hall door was unbarred after much ringing of the bell; an individual in ribbons was seen flitting up the black-oak stair as Horrocks at length admitted the heir of Queen's Crawley and his bride into the halls of their fathers. He led the way into Sir Pitt's "library," as it was called, the fumes of tobacco growing stronger as Pitt and Lady Jane approached that apartment. "Sir Pitt ain't very well," Horrocks remarked apologetically, and hinted that his master was afflicted with lumbago.

The library looked out on the front wall and park. Sir Pitt had opened one of the windows, and was bawling out thence to the postilion and Pitt's servant, who seemed to be about to take the baggage down.

"Don't move none of them trunks!" he cried, pointing with a pipe which he held in his hand. "It's only a morning visit, Tucker, you fool. Lor, what cracks that off hoss has in his heels! Ain't there no one at the King's Head to rub 'em a little? How do, Pitt? How do, my dear? Come to see the old man, hay?

Gad, you've a pretty face, too. You ain't like that old horse godmother, your mother. Come and give old Pitt a kiss like a good little gal."

The embrace disconcerted the daughter-in-law somewhat, as the caresses of the old gentleman, unshorn and perfumed with tobacco, might well do. But she remembered that her brother Southdown had mustachios and smoked cigars, and submitted to the Baronet with a tolerable grace.

"Pitt has got vat," said the Baronet after this mark of affection. "Does he read ee very long zermons, my dear? Hundredth Psalm, evening hymn, hay Pitt? Go and get a glass of Malmsey and a cake for my Lady Jane, Horrocks, you great big booby, and don't stand stearing there like a fat pig. I won't ask you to stop, my dear, you'll find it too stoopid, and so should I too alonga Pitt. I'm an old man now, and like my own ways, and my pipe and backgammon of a night."

"I can play at backgammon, sir," said Lady Jane, laughing. "I used to play with Papa and Miss Crawley, didn't I, Mr. Crawley?"

"Lady Jane can play, sir, at the game to which you state that you are so partial," Pitt said haughtily.

"But she wawn't stop for all that. Naw, naw, goo back to Mudbury and give Mrs. Rincer a benefit, or drive down to the rectory and ask Buty for a dinner. He'll be charmed to see you, you know, he's so much obliged to you fer gittin' the old woman's money. Ha, ha! Some of it will do to patch up the hall when I'm gone."

"I perceive, sir," said Pitt with a heightened voice, "that your people will cut down the timber."

"Yees, yees, very fine weather, and seasonable for the time of year," Sir Pitt answered, who had suddenly grown deaf. "But I'm gittin' old, Pitt, now. Law bless you, you ain't far from fifty yourself. But he wears well, my pretty Lady Jane, don't he? It's all godliness, sobriety, and a moral life. Look at me, I'm not very fur from fowrscore—he, he." And he laughed, and took snuff, and leered at her and pinched her hand.

Pitt once more brought the conversation back to the timber, but the Baronet was deaf again in an instant.

"I'm gittin' very old, and have been cruel bad this year with the lumbago. I shan't be here now for long, but I'm glad ee've come, daughter-in-law. I like your face, Lady Jane—it's got none of the damned high-boned Binkie look in it—and I'll give ee something pretty, my dear, to go to Court in." And he shuffled across the room to a cupboard, from which he took a little old case containing jewels of some value. "Take that," said he, "my dear. It belonged to my mother, and afterward to the first Lady Binkie. Pretty pearls—never gave 'em the ironmonger's daughter. No, no. Take 'em, and put 'em up quick," said he, thrusting the case into his daughter's hand and clapping the door of the cabinet to as Horrocks entered with a salver and refreshments.

"What have you been and given Pitt's wife?" said the individual in ribbons when Pitt and Lady Jane had taken leave of the old gentleman. It was Miss Horrocks, the butler's daughter—the cause of the scandal throughout the county, the lady who reigned now almost supreme at Queen's Crawley.

The rise and progress of those ribbons had been marked with dismay by the county and family. The Ribbons opened an account at the Mudbury Branch Savings Bank; the Ribbons drove to church, monopolizing the pony chaise, which was for the use of the servants at the hall. The domestics were dismissed at her pleasure.

Miss Horrocks was installed as housekeeper at Queen's Crawley, and ruled all the domestics there with great majesty and rigor. All the servants were instructed to address her as "mum," or "madam,"—and there was one little maid, on her promotion, who persisted in calling her "my lady," without any rebuke on the part of the housekeeper. "There has been better ladies, and there has been worser, Hester," was Miss Horrock's reply to this compliment of her inferior. So she ruled, having supreme power over all except her father, whom, however, she treated with considerable haughtiness, warning him not to be too familiar in his behavior to one "as was to be a baronet's lady." Indeed, she rehearsed that exalted part in life with great satisfaction to herself, and to the amusement of old Sir Pitt, who chuckled at her airs and graces and would laugh by the hour together at her assumptions of dignity and imitations of genteel life. He swore it was as good as a play to see her in the character of a fine dame, and he made her put on one of the first Lady Crawley's Court dresses, swearing (entirely to Miss Horrocks's own concurrence) that the dress became her prodigiously, and threatening to drive her off that very instant to Court in a coach and four. She had the ransacking of the wardrobes of the two defunct ladies, and cut and hacked their posthumous finery so as to suit her own tastes and figure. And she would have liked to take possession of their jewels and trinkets too, but the old Baronet had locked them away in his private cabinet, nor could she coax or wheedle him out of the keys. And it is a fact that sometime after she left Queen's Crawley a copybook belonging to this lady was discovered which showed that she had taken great pains in private to learn the art of writing in general, and especially of writing her own name as Lady Crawley, Lady Betsy Horrocks, Lady Elizabeth Crawley, etc.

Though the good people of the parsonage never went to the hall and shunned the horrid old dotard its owner, yet they kept a strict knowledge of all that happened there, and were looking out every day for the catastrophe for which Miss Horrocks was also eager. But fate intervened enviously and prevented her from receiving the reward due to such immaculate love and virtue.

One day the Baronet surprised "ner ladyship," as he jocularly called her, seated at that old and tuneless piano in the drawing-room which had scarcely been touched since Becky Sharp played quadrilles upon it—seated at the piano with the utmost gravity, and squalling to the best of her power in imitation of the music which she had sometimes heard. The little kitchenmaid on her promotion was standing at her mistress's side, quite delighted during the operation and wagging her head up and down and crying, "Lor, mum, 'tis bittiful"—just like a genteel sycophant in a real drawing-room.

This incident made the old Baronet roar with laughter, as usual. He narrated the circumstance a dozen times to Horrocks in the course of the eve-

ning, and greatly to the discomfiture of Miss Horrocks. He thrummed on the table as if it had been a musical instrument and squalled in imitation of her manner of singing. He vowed that such a beautiful voice ought to be cultivated, and declared she ought to have singing masters, in which proposals she saw nothing ridiculous. He was in great spirits that night, and drank with his friend and butler an extraordinary quantity of rum and water. At a very late hour the faithful friend and domestic conducted his master to his bedroom.

Half an hour afterward there was a great hurry and bustle in the house. Lights went about from window to window in the lonely, desolate old hall, whereof but two or three rooms were ordinarily occupied by its owner. Presently a boy on a pony went galloping off to Mudbury, to the Doctor's house there. And in another hour (by which fact we ascertain how carefully the excellent Mrs. Bute Crawley had always kept up an understanding with the great house) that lady, in her clogs and calash, the Reverend Bute Crawley, and James Crawley, her son, had walked over from the rectory through the park and had entered the mansion by the open hall door.

Bute went upstairs and found the Doctor from Mudbury with the frightened Horrocks over his master in a chair. They were trying to bleed Sir Pitt Crawley.

With the early morning an express was sent off to Mr. Pitt Crawley by the Rector's lady, who assumed the command of everything and had watched the old Baronet through the night. He had been brought back to a sort of life; he could not speak, but seemed to recognize people. Mrs. Bute kept resolutely by his bedside. She never seemed to want to sleep, that little woman, and did not close her fiery black eyes once, though the Doctor snored in the armchair. Horrocks made some wild efforts to assert his authority and assist his master, but Mrs. Bute called him a tipsy old wretch and bade him never show his face again in that house, or he should be transported like his abominable daughter.

Terrified by her manner, he slunk down to the oak parlor where Mr. James was, who, having tried the bottle standing there and found no liquor in it, ordered Mr. Horrocks to get another bottle of rum, which he fetched with clean glasses and to which the Rector and his son sat down, ordering Horrocks to put down the keys at that instant and never show his face again.

Cowed by this behavior, Horrocks gave up the keys, and he and his daughter slunk off silently through the night, and gave up the possession of the house of Queen's Crawley.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

The heir of Crawley arrived at home in due time after this catastrophe, and henceforth may be said to have reigned in Queen's Crawley. For though the old Baronet survived many months, he never recovered the use of his intellect or his speech completely, and the government of the estate devolved upon his elder son. In a strange condition Pitt found it. Sir Pitt was always buying and

mortgaging; he had twenty men of business, and quarrels with each, quarrels with all his tenants and lawsuits with them; lawsuits with the lawyers; lawsuits with the mining and dock companies in which he was proprietor, and with every person with whom he had business.

At last a day came when the nurse's occupation was over. Early one morning, as Pitt Crawley was at his steward's and bailiff's books in the study, a knock came to the door, and Hester presented herself, dropping a curtsy, and said:

"If you please, Sir Pitt, Sir Pitt died this morning, Sir Pitt. I was amaking of his toast, Sir Pitt, for his gruel, Sir Pitt, which he took every morning regular at six, Sir Pitt, and—I thought I heard a moan like, Sir Pitt—and—and—and——" She dropped another curtsy.

What was it that made Pitt's pale face flush quite red? Was it because he was Sir Pitt at last, with a seat in Parliament and perhaps future honors in prospect? "I'll clear the estate now with ready money," he thought, and rapidly calculated its incumbrances and the improvements which he would make. He would not use his aunt's money previously, lest Sir Pitt should recover and his outlay be in vain.

All the blinds were pulled down at the hall and rectory; the church bell was tolled, and the chancel hung in black; and Bute Crawley didn't go to a coursing meeting, but went and dined quietly at Fuddleston, where they talked about his deceased brother and young Sir Pitt over their port. Miss Betsy, who was by this time married to a saddler at Mudbury, cried a good deal. The family surgeon rode over and paid his respectful compliments and inquiries for the health of their ladyships. The death was talked about at Mudbury and at the Crawley Arms, the landlord whereof had become reconciled with the Rector of late, who was occasionally known to step into the parlor and taste Mr. Horrocks's mild beer.

"Shall I write to your brother, or will you?" asked Lady Jane of her husband, Sir Pitt.

"I will write, of course," Sir Pitt said, "and invite him to the funeral. It will be but becoming."

"And—and—Mrs. Rawdon," said Lady Jane timidly.

"Jane!" said Lady Southdown. "How can you think of such a thing?"

"Mrs. Rawdon must of course be asked," said Sir Pitt resolutely.

"Not while *I* am in the house!" said Lady Southdown.

"Your ladyship will be pleased to recollect that I am the head of this family," Sir Pitt replied. "If you please, Lady Jane, you will write a letter to Mrs. Rawdon Crawley requesting her presence upon this melancholy occasion."

So he dictated a letter to his brother Rawdon—a solemn and elaborate letter, containing the profoundest observations couched in the longest words, and filling with wonder the simple little secretary who wrote under her husband's order. "What an orator this will be," thought she, "when he enters the House of Commons" (on which point, and on the tyranny of Lady Southdown, Pitt had sometimes dropped hints to his wife in bed). "How wise and good and what a genius my husband is! I fancied him a little cold, but how good, and what a genius!"

The fact is Pitt Crawley had got every word of the letter by heart, and had studied it, with diplomatic secrecy, deeply and perfectly long before he thought fit to communicate it to his astonished wife. This letter, with a huge black border and seal, was accordingly dispatched by Sir Pitt Crawley to his brother the Colonel in London. Rawdon Crawley was but half pleased at the receipt of it. "What's the use of going down to that stupid place?" thought he. "I can't stand being alone with Pitt after dinner, and horses there and back will cost us twenty pound."

He carried the letter, as he did all difficulties, to Becky upstairs in her bedroom—with her chocolate, which he always made and took to her of a morning. He put the tray with the breakfast and the letter on the dressing table, before which Becky sat combing her yellow hair. She took up the black-edged missive, and having read it, she jumped up from the chair, crying, "Hurray!" and waving the note round her head. "Hurray!" said Rawdon, wondering at the little figure capering about in a streaming flannel dressing gown, with tawny locks disheveled. "He's not left us anything, Becky. I had my share when I came of age."

"You'll never be of age, you silly old man," Becky replied. "Run out now to Madame Brunoy's, for I must have some mourning. And get a crape on your hat, and a black waistcoat—I don't think you've got one. Order it to be brought home tomorrow, so that we may be able to start on Thursday."

"You don't mean to go?" Rawdon interposed.

"Of course I mean to go. I mean that Lady Jane shall present me at Court next year. I mean that your brother shall give you a seat in Parliament, you stupid old creature. I mean that Lord Steyne shall have your vote and his, my dear, old, silly man, and that you shall be an Irish Secretary, or a West Indian Governor, or a Treasurer, or a Consul, or some such thing."

"Posting will cost a dooce of a lot of money," grumbled Rawdon.

"We might take Southdown's carriage, which ought to be present at the funeral, as he is a relation of the family. But no—I intend that we shall go by the coach. They'll like it better. It seems more humble—"

"Rawdy goes, of course?" the Colonel asked.

"No such thing. Why pay an extra place? He's too big to travel bodkin between you and me. Let him stay here in the nursery, and Briggs can make him a black frock. Go you, and do as I bid you. And you had best tell Sparks, your man, that old Sir Pitt is dead, and that you will come in for something considerable when the affairs are arranged. He'll tell this to Raggles, who has been pressing for money, and it will console poor Raggles." And so Becky began sipping her chocolate.

When the faithful Lord Steyne arrived in the evening, he found Becky and her companion, who was no other than our friend Briggs, busy cutting, ripping, snipping, and tearing all sorts of black stuffs available for the melancholy occasion.

"Miss Briggs and I are plunged in grief and despondency for the death of our papa," Rebecca said. "Sir Pitt Crawley is dead, my lord. We have been tearing our hair all the morning, and now we are tearing up our old clothes."

"Oh, Rebecca, how can you——" was all that Briggs could say as she turned up her eyes.

"Oh, Rebecca, how can you——" echoed my lord. "So that old scoundrel's dead, is he? He might have been a peer if he had played his cards better. Mr. Pitt had very nearly made him, but he ratted always at the wrong time. What an old Silenus it was!"

"I might have been Silenus's widow," said Rebecca. "Don't you remember, Miss Briggs, how you peeped in at the door and saw old Sir Pitt on his knees to me?" Miss Briggs, our old friend, blushed very much at this reminiscence, and was glad when Lord Steyne ordered her to go downstairs and make him a cup of tea.

Briggs was the house dog whom Rebecca had provided as guardian of her innocence and reputation. Miss Crawley had left her a little annuity. She would have been content to remain in the Crawley family with Lady Jane, who was good to her and to everybody; but Lady Southdown dismissed poor Briggs as quickly as decency permitted, and Mr. Pitt (who thought himself much injured by the uncalled-for generosity of his deceased relative toward a lady who had only been Miss Crawley's faithful retainer a score of years) made no objection to that exercise of the Dowager's authority. Bowls and Firkin likewise received their legacies and their dismissals, and married and set up a lodging house, according to the custom of their kind.

Briggs tried to live with her relations in the country, but found that attempt was vain after the better society to which she had been accustomed. Briggs's friends, small tradesmen in a country town, quarreled over Miss Briggs's forty pounds a year as eagerly and more openly than Miss Crawley's kinsfolk had for that lady's inheritance. Briggs's brother, a Radical hatter and grocer, called his sister a purse-proud aristocrat because she would not advance a part of her capital to stock his shop; and she would have done so most likely but that their sister, a Dissenting shoemaker's lady at variance with the hatter and grocer, who went to another chapel, showed how their brother was on the verge of bankruptcy, and took possession of Briggs for a while. The Dissenting shoemaker wanted Miss Briggs to send his son to college and make a gentleman of him. Between them the two families got a great portion of her private savings out of her; and finally she fled to London, followed by the anathemas of both and determined to seek for servitude again as infinitely less onerous than liberty. And advertising in the papers that a "Gentlewoman of agreeable manners, and accustomed to the best society, was anxious to," etc., she took up her residence with Mr. Bowls in Half Moon Street, and waited the result of the advertisement.

So it was she fell in with Rebecca. Mrs. Rawdon's dashing little carriage and ponies was whirling down the street one day just as Miss Briggs, fatigued, had reached Mr. Bowls's door after a weary walk to the *Times* office in the city, to insert her advertisement for the sixth time. Rebecca was driving, and at once recognized the gentlewoman with agreeable manners, and being a perfectly good-humored woman, as we have seen, and having a regard for Briggs, she pulled up the ponies at the doorsteps, gave the reins to the groom, and jumping

out, had hold of both Briggs's hands before she of the agreeable manners had recovered from the shock of seeing an old friend.

Briggs cried, and Becky laughed a great deal and kissed the gentlewoman as soon as they got into the passage, and thence into Mrs. Bowls's front parlor with the red moreen curtains and the round looking-glass, with the chained eagle above gazing upon the back of the ticket in the window which announced "Apartments to let."

When she found how her friend was situated and how, having a snug legacy from Miss Crawley, salary was no object to our gentlewoman, Becky instantly formed some benevolent little domestic plans concerning her. This was just such a companion as would suit her establishment, and she invited Briggs to come to dinner with her that very evening, when she should see Becky's dear little darling Rawdon.

Mrs. Bowls cautioned her lodger against venturing into the lion's den, "wherein you will rue it, Miss B, mark my words, and as sure as my name is Bowls." And Briggs promised to be very cautious. The upshot of which caution was that she came to live with Mrs. Rawdon the next week, and lent Rawdon Crawley six hundred pounds upon annuity before six months were over.

CHAPTER XXXIX

So THE morning being ready, and Sir Pitt Crawley warned of their arrival, Colonel Crawley and his wife took a couple of places in the same old *High-flyer* coach by which Rebecca had traveled in the defunct baronet's company on her first journey into the world some nine years before. How well she remembered the innyard, and the ostler to whom she refused money, and the insinuating Cambridge lad who wrapped her in his coat on the journey! Rawdon took his place outside and would have liked to drive, but his grief forbade him. He sat by the coachman and talked about horses and the road the whole way, and who kept the inns, and who horsed the coach by which he had traveled so many a time when he and Pitt were boys going to Eton. At Mudbury a carriage and a pair of horses received them, with a coachman in black. "It's the old drag, Rawdon," Rebecca said as they got in.

"Your sisters must be young women now," Rebecca said, thinking of those girls for the first time, perhaps, since she had left them.

"Don't know, I'm shaw," replied the Colonel. "Hullo! Here's old Mother Lock. How-dy-do, Mrs. Lock? Remember me, don't you? Master Rawdon, eh? Dammy how those old women last. She was a hundred when I was a boy."

They were going through the lodge gates kept by old Mrs. Lock, whose hand Rebecca insisted upon shaking as she flung open the creaking old iron gate, and the carriage passed between the two mossgrown pillars surmounted by the dove and serpent.

The gravel walk and terrace had been scraped quite clean. A grand painted hatchment was already over the great entrance, and two very solemn and tall

personages in black flung open each a leaf of the door as the carriage pulled up at the familiar steps. Rawdon turned red and Becky somewhat pale as they passed through the old hall arm-in-arm. She pinched her husband's arm as they entered the oak parlor, where Sir Pitt and his wife were ready to receive them. Sir Pitt in black, Lady Jane in black, and my Lady Southdown with a large black headpiece of bugles and feathers, which waved on her ladyship's head like an undertaker's tray.

Pitt, with rather a heightened color, went up and shook his brother by the hand, and saluted Rebecca with a handshake and a very low bow. But Lady Jane took both the hands of her sister-in-law and kissed her affectionately. The embrace somehow brought tears into the eyes of the little adventuress—which ornaments, as we know, she wore very seldom. The artless mark of kindness and confidence touched and pleased her; and Rawdon, encouraged by this demonstration on his sister's part, twirled up his mustachios and took leave to salute Lady Jane with a kiss, which caused her ladyship to blush exceedingly.

"Dev'lish nice little woman, Lady Jane," was his verdict when he and his wife were together again. "Pitt's got fat too, and is doing the thing handsomely." "He can afford it," said Rebecca, and agreed in her husband's further opinion that the mother-in-law was a "tremendous old guy," and that the sisters were "rather well-looking young women."

They too had been summoned from school to attend the funeral ceremonies. It seemed Sir Pitt Crawley, for the dignity of the house and family, had thought right to have about the house as many persons in black as could possibly be assembled. All the men and maids of the house, the old women of the almshouse, whom the elder Sir Pitt had cheated out of a great portion of their due, the parish clerk's family, and the special retainers of both hall and rectory were habited in sable. Added to these, the undertaker's men, at least a score, with crapes and hatbands, and who made a goodly show when the great burying show took place—but these are mute personages in our drama, and having nothing to do or say, need occupy a very little space here.

With regard to her sisters-in-law, Rebecca did not attempt to forget her former position of governess toward them, but recalled it frankly and kindly, and asked them about their studies with great gravity, and told them that she had thought of them many and many a day and longed to know of their welfare. In fact you would have supposed that ever since she had left them she had not ceased to keep them uppermost in her thoughts and to take the tenderest interest in their welfare. So supposed Lady Crawley herself and her young sisters.

But before this Lady Jane conducted Rebecca to the apartments prepared for her, which, with the rest of the house, had assumed a very much improved appearance of order and comfort during Pitt's regency, and here beholding that Mrs. Rawdon's modest little trunks had arrived and were placed in the bedroom and dressing-room adjoining, helped her to take off her neat black bonnet and cloak, and asked her sister-in-law in what more she could be useful.

"What I should like best," said Rebecca, "would be to go to the nursery

and see your dear little children." On which the two ladies looked very kindly at each other, and went to that apartment hand in hand.

Becky admired little Matilda, who was not quite four years old, as the most charming little love in the world, and the boy, a little fellow of two years—pale, heavy-eyed, and large-headed—she pronounced to be a perfect prodigy in point of size, intelligence, and beauty.

"I wish Mamma would not insist on giving him so much medicine," Lady Jane said with a sigh. "I often think we should all be better without it." And then Lady Jane and her new-found friend had one of those confidential medical conversations about the children which all mothers, and most women, as I am given to understand, delight in. Fifty years ago, and when the present writer, being an interesting little boy, was ordered out of the room with the ladies after dinner, I remember quite well that their talk was chiefly about their ailments; and putting this question directly to two or three since, I have always got from them the acknowledgment that times are not changed. Let my fair readers remark for themselves this very evening when they quit the dessert table and assemble to celebrate the drawing-room mysteries. Well—in half an hour Becky and Lady Jane were close and intimate friends, and in the course of the evening her ladyship informed Sir Pitt that she thought her new sister-in-law was a kind, frank, unaffected, and affectionate young woman.

And so, having easily won the daughter's goodwill, the indefatigable little woman bent herself to conciliate the august Lady Southdown. As soon as she found her ladyship alone, Rebecca attacked her on the nursery question at once, and said that her own little boy was saved, actually saved, by calomel, freely administered, when all the physicians in Paris had given the dear child up. And then she mentioned how often she had heard of Lady Southdown from that excellent man the Reverend Lawrence Grills, minister of the chapel in Mayfair, which she frequented; and how her views were very much changed by circumstances and misfortunes; and how she hoped that a past life spent in worldliness and error might not incapacitate her from *more serious* thought for the future. She described how in former days she had been indebted to Mr. Crawley for religious instruction, touched upon the *Washerwoman of Finchley Common*, which she had read with the greatest profit, and asked about Lady Emily, its gifted author, now Lady Emily Hornblower at Cape Town, where her husband had strong hopes of becoming Bishop of Caffraria.

Sir Pitt remembered the testimonies of respect and veneration which Rebecca had paid personally to himself in early days, and was tolerably well disposed toward her. The marriage, ill-advised as it was, had improved Rawdon very much—that was clear from the Colonel's altered habits and demeanor—and had it not been a lucky union as regarded Pitt himself? The cunning diplomatist smiled inwardly as he owned that he owed his fortune to it, and acknowledged that he at least ought not to cry out against it. His satisfaction was not removed by Rebecca's own statements, behavior, and conversation.

She doubled the deference which before had charmed him, calling out his conversational powers in such a manner as to quite surprise Pitt himself, who,

always inclined to respect his own talents, admired them the more when Rebecca pointed them out to him. With her sister-in-law, Rebecca was satisfactorily able to prove that it was Mrs. Bute Crawley who brought about the marriage which she afterward so calumniated, that it was Mrs. Bute's avarice—who hoped to gain all Miss Crawley's fortune and deprive Rawdon of his aunt's favor—which caused and invented all the wicked reports against Rebecca. "She succeeded in making us poor," Rebecca said, with an air of angelical patience. "But how can I be angry with a woman who has given me one of the best husbands in the world? And has not her own avarice been sufficiently punished by the ruin of her own hopes, and the loss of the property by which she set so much store? Poor!" she cried. "Dear Lady Jane, what care we for poverty? I am used to it from childhood, and I am often thankful that Miss Crawley's money has gone to restore the splendor of the noble old family of which I am so proud to be a member. I am sure Sir Pitt will make a much better use of it than Rawdon would."

All these speeches were reported to Sir Pitt by the most faithful of wives, and increased the favorable impression which Rebecca made—so much so that on the third day after the funeral the family party were at dinner, Sir Pitt Crawley, carving fowls at the head of the table, actually said to Mrs. Rawdon, "Ahem! *Rebecca*, may I give you a wing?"—a speech which made the little woman's eyes sparkle with pleasure.

While Rebecca was prosecuting the above schemes and hopes, and Pitt Crawley arranging the funeral ceremonial and other matters connected with his future progress and dignity, and Lady Jane busy with her nursery—as far as her mother would let her—and the sun rising and setting, and the clock-tower bell of the hall ringing to dinner and to prayers as usual, the body of the late owner of Queen's Crawley lay in the apartment which he had occupied, watched unceasingly by the professional attendants who were engaged for that rite. A woman or two, and three or four undertaker's men, the best whom Southampton could furnish, dressed in black and of a proper stealthy and tragical demeanor, had charge of the remains, which they watched turn about, having the housekeeper's room for their place of rendezvous when off duty, where they played at cards in privacy and drank their beer.

The members of the family and servants of the house kept away from the gloomy spot where the bones of the descendant of an ancient line of knights and gentlemen lay awaiting their final consignment to the family crypt. No regrets attended them save those of the poor woman who had hoped to be Sir Pitt's wife and widow, and who had fled in disgrace from the hall over which she had so nearly been a ruler. Beyond her and a favorite old pointer he had, and between whom and himself an attachment subsisted during the period of his imbecility, the old man had not a single friend to mourn him, having indeed during the whole course of his life never taken the least pains to secure one. Could the best and kindest of us who depart from the earth have an opportunity of revisiting it, I suppose he or she (assuming that any Vanity Fair feelings subsist in the sphere whither we are bound) would have

a pang of mortification at finding how soon our survivors were consoled. And so Sir Pitt was forgotten, like the kindest and best of us—only a few weeks sooner.

As the birds were pretty plentiful, and partridge shooting is as it were the duty of an English gentleman of statesmanlike propensities, Sir Pitt Crawley, the first shock of grief over, went out a little and partook of that diversion in a white hat with crape round it. The sight of those fields of stubble and turnips, now his own, gave him many secret joys. Sometimes, and with an exquisite humility, he took no gun, but went out with a peaceful bamboo cane, Rawdon, his big brother, and the keepers blazing away at his side. Pitt's money and acres had a great effect upon his brother. The penniless Colonel became quite obsequious and respectful to the head of his house, and despised the milksop Pitt no longer. Rawdon listened with sympathy to his senior's prospects of planting and draining; gave his advice about the stables and cattle; rode over to Mudbury to look at a mare which he thought would carry Lady Jane, and offered to break her, etc. The rebellious dragoon was quite humbled and subdued, and became a most creditable younger brother. He had constant bulletins from Miss Briggs in London respecting little Rawdon, who was left behind there, who sent messages of his own. "I am very well," he wrote. "I hope you are very well. I hope Mamma is well. The pony is very well. Grey takes me to ride in the park. I can canter. I met the little boy who rode before. He cried when he cantered. I do not cry." Rawdon read these letters to his brother and Lady Jane, who was delighted with them. The Baronet promised to take charge of the lad at school, and his kindhearted wife gave Rebecca a banknote, begging her to buy a present with it for her little nephew.

One day followed another, and the ladies of the house passed their life in those calm pursuits and amusements which satisfy country ladies. Bells rang to meals and to prayers. The young ladies took exercise on the pianoforte every morning after breakfast, Rebecca giving them the benefit of her instruction. Then they put on thick shoes and walked in the park or shrubberies, or beyond the palings into the village, descending upon the cottages with Lady Southdown's medicine and tracts for the sick people there. Lady Southdown drove out in a pony chaise, when Rebecca would take her place by the Dowager's side and listen to her solemn talk with the utmost interest. She sang Handel and Haydn to the family of evenings, and engaged in a large piece of worsted work as if she had been born to the business, and as if this kind of life was to continue with her till she should sink to the grave in a polite old age, leaving regrets and a great quantity of consols behind her—as if there were not cares and duns, schemes, shifts, and poverty waiting outside the park gates to pounce upon her when she issued into the world again.

"It isn't difficult to be a country gentleman's wife," Rebecca thought. "I think I could be a good woman if I had five thousand a year. I could dawdle about in the nursery, and count the apricots on the wall. I could water plants in a greenhouse, and pick off dead leaves from the geraniums. I could ask old women about their rheumatisms, and order half a crown's worth of soup for the poor. I shouldn't miss it much out of five thousand a year. I could even

drive out ten miles to dine at a neighbor's, and dress in the fashions of the year before last. I could go to church and keep awake in the great family pew, or go to sleep behind the curtains, with my veil down—if I only had practice. I could pay everybody if I had but the money. This is what the conjurers here pride themselves upon doing. They look down with pity upon us miserable sinners who have none. They think themselves generous if they give our children a five-pound note, and us contemptible if we are without one."

The old haunts, the old fields and woods, the copses, ponds, and gardens, the rooms of the old house where she had spent a couple of years seven years ago, were all carefully revisited by her. She had been young there, or comparatively so, for she forgot the time when she ever *was* young—but she remembered her thoughts and feelings seven years back, and contrasted them with those she had at present now that she had seen the world and lived with great people, and raised herself far beyond her original humble station.

"I have passed beyond it because I have brains," Becky thought, "and almost all the rest of the world are fools. I could not go back and consort with those people now whom I used to meet in my father's studio. Lords come up to my door with Stars and Garters instead of poor artists with screws of tobacco in their pockets. I have a gentleman for my husband, and an earl's daughter for my sister, in the very house where I was little better than a servant a few years ago. But am I much better-to-do now in the world than I was when I was the poor painter's daughter and wheedled the grocer round the corner for sugar and tea? Suppose I had married Francis, who was so fond of me—I couldn't have been much poorer than I am now. Heigho! I wish I could exchange my position in society and all my relations for a snug sum in the three per cent consols." For so it was that Becky felt the vanity of human affairs, and it was in those securities that she would have liked to cast anchor.

It may perhaps have struck her that to be honest and humble, to have done her duty, and to have marched straightforward on her way would have brought her as near happiness as that path by which she was striving to attain it. But—just as the children at Queen's Crawley went round the room where the body of their father lay—if ever Becky had these thoughts, she was accustomed to walk round them and not look in. She eluded them, and despised them—or at least she was committed to the other path, from which retreat was now impossible. And for my part, I believe that remorse is the least active of all a man's moral senses, the very easiest to be deadened when wakened, and in some never wakened at all. We grieve at being found out, and at the idea of shame or punishment, but the mere sense of wrong makes very few people unhappy in Vanity Fair.

So Rebecca during her stay at Queen's Crawley made as many friends of the mammon of unrighteousness as she could possibly bring under control. Lady Jane and her husband bade her farewell with the warmest demonstrations of goodwill. They looked forward with pleasure to the time when, the family house in Gaunt Street being repaired and beautified, they were to meet again in London. Lady Southdown made her up a packet of medicine, and sent a letter by her to the Reverend Lawrence Grills exhorting that gentleman

to save the brand who "honored" the letter from the burning. Pitt accompanied them with four horses in the carriage to Mudbury, having sent on their baggage in a cart previously, accompanied with loads of game.

"How happy you will be to see your darling little boy again!" Lady Crawley said, taking leave of her kinswoman.

"Oh, so happy!" said Rebecca, throwing up the green eyes. She was immensely happy to be free of the place, and yet loath to go. Queen's Crawley was abominably stupid, and yet the air there was somehow purer than that which she had been accustomed to breathe. Everybody had been dull, but had been kind in their way. "It is all the influence of a long course of three per cents," Becky said to herself, and was right, very likely.

However, the London lamps flashed joyfully as the stage rolled into Piccadilly, and Briggs had made a beautiful fire in Curzon Street, and little Rawdon was up to welcome back his papa and mamma.

CHAPTER XL

Considerable time has elapsed since we have seen our respectable friend old Mr. Osborne of Russell Square. He has not been the happiest of mortals since last we met him. Events have occurred which have not improved his temper, and in more instances than one he has not been allowed to have his own way. To be thwarted in this reasonable desire was always very injurious to the old gentleman, and resistance became doubly exasperating when gout, age, loneliness, and the force of many disappointments combined to weigh him down. His stiff black hair began to grow quite white soon after his son's death, his face grew redder, his hands trembled more and more as he poured out his glass of port wine. He led his clerks a dire life in the city, his family at home were not much happier. I doubt if Rebecca, whom we have seen piously praying for consols, would have exchanged her poverty and the daredevil excitement and chances of her life for Osborne's money and the humdrum gloom which enveloped him.

Frederick Bullock, Esquire, of the house of Bullock, Hulker, & Bullock, had married Maria Osborne, not without a great deal of difficulty and grumbling on Mr. Bullock's part. George being dead and cut out of his father's will, Frederick insisted that the half of the old gentleman's property should be settled upon his Maria, and indeed for a long time refused "to come to the scratch" (it was Mr. Frederick's own expression) on any other terms. Osborne said Fred had agreed to take his daughter with twenty thousand, and he should bind himself to no more. Fred might take it and welcome, or leave it and go and be hanged. Fred, whose hopes had been raised when George had been disinherited, thought himself infamously swindled by the old merchant, and for some time made as if he would break off the match altogether. Osborne withdrew his account from Bullock & Hulker's, went on 'Change with a horsewhip which he swore he would lay across the back of a certain scoundrel that

should be nameless, and demeaned himself in his usual violent manner. Jane Osborne condoled with her sister Maria during this family feud.

"I always told you, Maria, that it was your money he loved, and not you," she said soothingly.

"He selected *me* and my money at any rate. He didn't choose you and yours," replied Maria, tossing up her head.

The rupture was, however, only temporary. Fred's father and senior partners counseled him to take Maria, even with the twenty thousand settled half down and half at the death of Mr. Osborne, with the chances of the further division of the property. So he "knuckled down" again, to use his own phrase, and sent old Hulker with peaceable overtures to Osborne. It was his father, he said, who would not hear of the match, and had made the difficulties; he was most anxious to keep the engagement. The excuse was sulkily accepted by Mr. Osborne. Hulker & Bullock were a high family of the city aristocracy, and connected with the "nobs" at the West End. It was something for the old man to be able to say "My son, sir, of the house of Hulker, Bullock & Co., sir. My daughter's cousin, Lady Mary Mango, sir, daughter of the Right Honorable the Earl of Castlemouldy." In his imagination he saw his house peopled by the "nobs." So he forgave young Bullock, and consented that the marriage should take place.

The young couple had a house near Berkeley Square and a small villa at Roehampton, among the banking colony there. Fred was considered to have made rather a mésalliance by the ladies of his family, whose grandfather had been in a charity school, and who were allied through the husbands with some of the best blood in England. And Maria was bound by superior pride and great care in the composition of her visiting book to make up for the defects of birth, and felt it her duty to see her father and sister as little as possible.

That she should utterly break with the old man, who had still so many scores of thousand pounds to give away, is absurd to suppose. Fred Bullock would never allow her to do that. But she was still young and incapable of hiding her feelings; and by inviting her papa and sister to her third-rate parties and behaving very coldly to them when they came, and by avoiding Russell Square and indiscreetly begging her father to quit that odious vulgar place, she did more harm than all Frederick's diplomacy could repair, and periled her chance of her inheritance like a giddy, heedless creature as she was.

"So Russell Square is not good enough for Mrs. Maria, hay?" said the old gentleman, rattling up the carriage windows as he and his daughter drove away one night from Mrs. Frederick Bullock's after dinner. "So she invites her father and sister to a second day's dinner (if those sides, or *ontrys*, as she calls 'em, weren't served yesterday, I'm damned), and to meet city folks and littery men, and keeps the earls and the ladies and the honorables to herself. Honorables? Damn honorables. I am a plain British merchant, I am, and could buy the beggarly hounds over and over. Lords, indeed!—Why, at one of her *swarreys* I saw one of 'em speak to a dam fiddler—a fellar I despise. And they won't come to Russell Square, won't they? Why, I'll lay my life I've got a better glass of wine, and pay a better figure for it, and can show a handsomer

service of silver, and can lay a better dinner on my mahogany than ever they see on theirs—the cringing, sneaking, stuck-up fools. Drive on quick, James. I want to get back to Russell Square—ha, ha!" and he sank back into the corner with a furious laugh. With such reflections on his own superior merit it was the custom of the old gentleman not unfrequently to console himself.

Jane Osborne could not but concur in these opinions respecting her sister's conduct. And when Mrs. Frederick's firstborn, Frederick Augustus Howard Stanley Devereux Bullock, was born, old Osborne, who was invited to the christening and to be godfather, contented himself with sending the child a gold cup with twenty guineas inside it for the nurse. "That's more than any of your lords will give, *I'll* warrant," he said, and refused to attend at the ceremony. The splendor of the gift, however, caused great satisfaction to the house of Bullock. Maria thought that her father was very much pleased with her, and Frederick augured the best for his little son and heir.

It has been described how the Misses Dobbin lived with their father at a a fine villa at Denmark Hill, where there were beautiful graperies and peach trees which delighted little Georgy Osborne. The Misses Dobbin, who drove often to Brompton to see our dear Amelia, came sometimes to Russell Square too, to pay a visit to their old acquaintance Miss Osborne. I believe it was in consequence of the commands of their brother the Major in India (for whom their papa had a prodigious respect) that they paid attention to Mrs. George; for the Major, the godfather and guardian of Amelia's little boy, still hoped that the child's grandfather might be induced to relent toward him and acknowledge him for the sake of his son. The Misses Dobbin kept Miss Osborne acquainted with the state of Amelia's affairs—how she was living with her father and mother; how poor they were; how they wondered what men, and such men as their brother and dear Captain Osborne, could find in such an insignificant little chit; how she was still, as heretofore, a namby-pamby milk-and-water affected creature—but how the boy was really the noblest little boy ever seen, for the hearts of all women warm toward young children, and the sourest spinster is kind to them.

One day, after great entreaties on the part of the Misses Dobbin, Amelia allowed little George to go and pass a day with them at Denmark Hill—a part of which day she spent herself in writing to the Major in India. She congratulated him on the happy news which his sisters had just conveyed to her. She prayed for his prosperity and that of the bride he had chosen. She thanked him for a thousand thousand kind offices and proofs of steadfast friendship to her in her affliction. She told him the last news about little Georgy, and how he was gone to spend that very day with his sisters in the country. She underlined the letter a great deal, and she signed herself affectionately his friend, Amelia Osborne. She forgot to send any messages of kindness to Lady O'Dowd, as her wont was, and did not mention Glorvina by name, and only in italics, as the Major's *bride*, for whom she begged *blessings*. But the news of the marriage removed the reserve which she had kept up toward him. She was glad to be able to own and feel how warmly and gratefully she regarded him—and

as for the idea of being jealous of Glorvina (Glorvina, indeed!), Amelia would have scouted it if an angel from Heaven had hinted it to her.

That night when Georgy came back in the pony carriage in which he rejoiced and in which he was driven by Sir William Dobbin's old coachman, he had round his neck a fine gold chain and watch. He said an old lady, not pretty, had given it to him, who cried and kissed him a great deal. But he didn't like her. He liked grapes very much. And he only liked his mamma. Amelia shrank and started. The timid soul felt a presentiment of terror when she heard that the relations of the child's father had seen him.

Miss Osborne came back to give her father his dinner. He had made a good speculation in the City, and was rather in a good humor that day, and chanced to remark the agitation under which she labored. "What's the matter, Miss Osborne?" he deigned to say.

The woman burst into tears. "Oh, sir," she said, "I've seen little George. He is as beautiful as an angel—and so like him!" The old man opposite to her did not say a word, but flushed up and began to tremble in every limb.

CHAPTER XLI

The astonished reader must be called upon to transport himself ten thousand miles to the military station of Bundlegunge, in the Madras division of our Indian empire, where our gallant old friends of the —th regiment are quartered under the command of the brave Colonel Sir Michael O'Dowd. Time has dealt kindly with that stout officer, as it does ordinarily with men who have good stomachs and good tempers, and are not perplexed overmuch by fatigue of the brain. The Colonel plays a good knife and fork at tiffin, and resumes those weapons with great success at dinner. He smokes his hookah after both meals, and puffs as quietly while his wife scolds him as he did under the fire of the French at Waterloo.

Age and heat have not diminished the activity or the eloquence of the descendant of the Malonys and the Molloys. Her ladyship, our old acquaintance, is as much at home at Madras as at Brussels—in the cantonment as under the tents. On the march you saw her at the head of the regiment seated on a royal elephant, a noble sight. Mounted on that beast, she has been into action with tigers in the jungle. She has been received by native princes who have welcomed her and Glorvina into the recesses of their zenanas and offered her shawls and jewels which it went to her heart to refuse. The sentries of all arms salute her wherever she makes her appearance, and she touches her hat gravely to their salutation. Lady O'Dowd is one of the greatest ladies in the Presidency of Madras—her quarrel with Lady Smith, wife of Sir Minos Smith the puisne judge, is still remembered by some at Madras, when the Colonel's lady snapped her fingers in the Judge's lady's face, and said *she'd* never walk behind ever a beggarly civilian. Even now, though it is five and twenty years ago, people remember Lady O'Dowd performing a jig at Government House,

where she danced down two aides-de-camp, a Major of Madras cavalry, and two gentlemen of the civil service; and, persuaded by Major Dobbin, C.B., second in command of the –th, to retire to the supper room, *lassata nondum satiata recessit.*

Peggy O'Dowd is indeed the same as ever—kind in act and thought, impetuous in temper, eager to command, a tyrant over her Michael, a dragon among all the ladies of the regiment, a mother to all the young men, whom she tends in their sickness, defends in all their scrapes, and with whom Lady Peggy is immensely popular. But the subalterns' and captains' ladies (the Major is unmarried) cabal against her a good deal. They say that Glorvina gives herself airs, and that Peggy herself is intolerably domineering. She interfered with a little congregation which Mrs. Kirk had got up, and laughed the young men away from her sermons, stating that a soldier's wife had no business to be a parson: that Mrs. Kirk would be much better mending her husband's clothes; and if the regiment wanted sermons, that she had the finest in the world, those of her uncle the Dean.

Among other points, she had made up her mind that Glorvina should marry our old friend Dobbin. Mrs. O'Dowd knew the Major's expectations and appreciated his good qualities and the high character which he enjoyed in his profession. Glorvina, a very handsome, fresh-colored, black-haired, blue-eyed young lady who could ride a horse or play a sonata with any girl out of the County Cork, seemed to be the very person destined to ensure Dobbin's happiness—much more than that poor, good little weak-spur'ted Amelia, about whom he used to take on so.—"Look at Glorvina enter a room," Mrs. O'Dowd would say, "and compare her with that poor Mrs. Osborne, who couldn't say boo to a goose. She'd be worthy of you, Major—you're a quiet man yourself, and want someone to talk for ye. And though she does not come of such good blood as the Malonys or Molloys, let me tell ye she's of an ancient family that any nobleman might be proud to marry into."

Well, although Lady O'Dowd and Glorvina quarreled a great number of times every day, and upon almost every conceivable subject indeed, if Mick O'Dowd had not possessed the temper of an angel two such women constantly about his ears would have driven him out of his senses—yet they agreed between themselves on this point, that Glorvina should marry Major Dobbin, and were determined that the Major should have no rest until the arrangement was brought about. Undismayed by forty or fifty previous defeats, Glorvina laid siege to him. She sang Irish melodies at him unceasingly. She asked him so frequently and pathetically, Will ye come to the bower? that it is a wonder how any man of feeling could have resisted the invitation. She was never tired of inquiring if sorrow had his young days faded, and was ready to listen and weep like Desdemona at the stories of his dangers and his campaigns. It has been said that our honest and dear old friend used to perform on the flute in private. Glorvina insisted upon having duets with him, and Lady O'Dowd would rise and artlessly quit the room when the young couple were so engaged. Glorvina forced the Major to ride with her of mornings. The whole cantonment saw them set out and return. She was constantly writ-

ing notes over to him at his house, borrowing his books, and scoring with her great pencil marks such passages of sentiment or humor as awakened her sympathy. She borrowed his horses, his servant, his spoons, and palankin—no wonder that public rumor assigned her to him, and that the Major's sisters in England should fancy they were about to have a sister-in-law.

Dobbin, who was thus vigorously besieged, was in the meanwhile in a state of the most odious tranquillity. He used to laugh when the young fellows of the regiment joked him about Glorvina's manifest attentions to him. "Bah," said he, "she is only keeping her hand in—she practices upon me as she does upon Mrs. Tozer's piano, because it's the most handy instrument in the station. I am much too battered and old for such a fine young lady as Glorvina." And so he went on riding with her, and copying music and verses into her albums, and playing at chess with her very submissively; for it is with these simple amusements that some officers in India are accustomed to while away their leisure moments while others of a less domestic turn hunt hogs, and shoot snipes, or gamble and smoke cheroots, and betake themselves to brandy and water. As for Sir Michael O'Dowd, though his lady and her sister both urged him to call upon the Major to explain himself, and not keep on torturing a poor innocent girl in that shameful way, the old soldier refused point-blank to have anything to do with the conspiracy. "Faith, the Major's big enough to choose for himself," Sir Michael said. "He'll ask ye when he wants ye."—Or else he would turn the matter off jocularly, declaring that Dobbin was too young to keep house, and had written home to ask leave of his mamma. Nay, he went further, and in private communications with his Major would caution and rally him, crying: "Mind your oi, Dob, my boy, them girls is bent on mischief.—Me lady has just got a box of gowns from Europe, and there's a pink satin for Glorvina which will finish ye, Dob, if it's in the power of woman or satin to move ye."

But the truth is neither beauty nor fashion could conquer him. Our honest friend had but one idea of a woman in his head, and that one did not in the least resemble Miss Glorvina O'Dowd in pink satin. A gentle little woman in black, with large eyes and brown hair, seldom speaking save when spoken to, and then in a voice not the least resembling Miss Glorvina's—a soft young mother tending an infant, and beckoning the Major up with a smile to look at him—a rosy-cheeked lass coming singing into the room in Russell Square, or hanging on George Osborne's arm, happy and loving—there was but this image that filled our honest Major's mind by day and by night, and reigned over it always. Very likely Amelia was not like the portrait the Major had formed of her. There was a figure in a book of fashions which his sisters had in England, and with which William had made away privately, pasting it into the lid of his desk and fancying he saw some resemblance to Mrs. Osborne in the print, whereas I have seen it, and can vouch that it is but the picture of a high-waisted gown with an impossible doll's face simpering over it—and perhaps Mr. Dobbin's sentimental Amelia was no more like the real one than this absurd little print which he cherished. But what man in love, of us, is better informed? Or is he much happier when he sees and owns his delusion? Dobbin was under this

spell. He did not bother his friends and the public much about his feelings, or indeed lose his natural rest on account of them. His head has grizzled since we saw him last, and a line or two of silver may be seen in the soft brown hair likewise. But his feelings are not in the least changed or oldened, and his love remains as fresh as a man's recollections of boyhood are.

We have said how the two Misses Dobbins and Amelia, the Major's correspondents in Europe, wrote him letters from England. Mrs. Osborne congratulated him with great candor and cordiality upon his approaching nuptials with Miss O'Dowd.

"Your sister has just kindly visited me," Amelia wrote in her letter, "and informed me of an *interesting event*, upon which I beg to offer my *most sincere congratulations*. I hope the young lady to whom I hear you are to be *united* will in every respect prove worthy of one who is himself all kindness and goodness. The poor widow has only her prayers to offer, and her cordial wishes for *your prosperity!* Georgy sends his love to *his dear godpapa*, and hopes that you will not forget him. I tell him that you are about to form *other ties* with one who I am sure merits *all your affection*, but that although such ties must of course be the strongest and most sacred, and supersede *all others*, yet that I am sure that the widow and the child whom you have ever protected and loved will always *have a corner in your heart*." The letter, which has been before alluded to, went on in this strain, protesting throughout as to the extreme satisfaction of the writer.

This letter, which arrived by the very same ship which brought out Lady O'Dowd's box of millinery from London (and which you may be sure Dobbin opened before any one of the other packets which the mail brought him), put the receiver into such a state of mind that Glorvina, and her pink satin, and everything belonging to her became perfectly odious to him. The Major cursed the talk of women, and the sex in general. Everything annoyed him that day—the parade was insufferably hot and wearisome. Good heavens, was a man of intellect to waste his life, day after day, inspecting crossbelts and putting fools through their maneuvers? The senseless chatter of the young men at mess was more than ever jarring. What cared he, a man on the high road to forty, to know how many snipes Lieutenant Smith had shot, or what were the performances of Ensign Brown's mare? The jokes about the table filled him with shame. He was too old to listen to the banter of the assistant surgeon and the slang of the youngsters, at which old O'Dowd, with his bald head and red face, laughed quite easily. The old man had listened to those jokes any time these thirty years—Dobbin himself had been fifteen years hearing them. And after the boisterous dullness of the mess table, the quarrels and scandal of the ladies of the regiment! It was unbearable, shameful.

"O Amelia, Amelia," he thought, "you to whom I have been so faithful—you reproach me! It is because you cannot feel for me that I drag on this wearisome life. And you reward me after years of devotion by giving me your blessing upon my marriage, forsooth, with this flaunting Irish girl!" Sick and sorry felt poor William, more than ever wretched and lonely. He would liked to have done with life and its vanity altogether—so bootless and unsatis-

factory the struggle, so cheerless and dreary the prospect seemed to him. He lay all that night sleepless, and yearning to go home. Amelia's letter had fallen as a blank upon him. No fidelity, no constant truth and passion, could move her into warmth. She would not see that he loved her. Tossing in his bed, he spoke out to her.

"Good God, Amelia," he said, "don't you know that I only love you in the world—you, who are a stone to me—you, whom I tended through months and months of illness and grief, and who bade me farewell with a smile on your face and forgot me before the door shut between us!" The native servants lying outside his verandas beheld with wonder the Major, so cold and quiet ordinarily, at present so passionately moved and cast down. Would she have pitied him had she seen him? He read over and over all the letters which he ever had from her—letters of business relative to the little property which he had made her believe her husband had left to her, brief notes of invitation, every scrap of writing that she had ever sent to him—how cold, how kind, how hopeless, how selfish they were!

Had there been some kind, gentle soul near at hand who could read and appreciate this silent, generous heart, who knows but that the reign of Amelia might have been over, and that friend William's love might have flowed into a kinder channel? But there was only Glorvina of the jetty ringlets with whom his intercourse was familiar, and this dashing young woman was not bent upon loving the Major, but rather upon making the Major admire *her*—a most vain and hopeless task too, at least considering the means that the poor girl possessed to carry it out. She curled her hair and showed her shoulders at him, as much as to say "Did ye ever see such jet ringlets and such a complexion?" She grinned at him so that he might see that every tooth in her head was sound—and he never heeded all these charms. Very soon after the arrival of the box of millinery, and perhaps indeed in honor of it, Lady O'Dowd and the ladies of the King's Regiment gave a ball to the company's regiments and the civilians at the station. Glorvina sported the killing pink frock, and the Major, who attended the party and walked very ruefully up and down the rooms, never so much as perceived the pink garment. Glorvina dashed past him in a fury with all the young subalterns of the station, and the Major was not in the least jealous of her performance, or angry because Captain Bangles of the cavalry handed her to supper. It was not jealousy, or frocks, or shoulders that could move him, and Glorvina had nothing more.

So these two were each exemplifying the vanity of this life, and each longing for what he or she could not get. Glorvina cried with rage at the failure. She had set her mind on the Major "more than on any of the others," she owned, sobbing. "He'll break my heart, he will, Peggy," she would whimper to her sister-in-law when they were good friends. "Sure every one of me frocks must be taken in—it's such a skeleton I'm growing." Fat or thin, laughing or melancholy, on horseback or the music stool, it was all the same to the Major. And the Colonel, puffing his pipe and listening to these complaints, would suggest that Glory should have some black frocks out in the next box from Lon-

don, and told a mysterious story of a lady in Ireland who died of grief for the loss of her husband before she got ere a one.

While the Major was going on in this tantalizing way, not proposing and declining to fall in love, there came another ship from Europe bringing letters on board, and among them some more for the heartless man. These were home letters bearing an earlier postmark than that of the former packets, and as Major Dobbin recognized among his the handwriting of his sister, who always crossed and recrossed her letters to her brother—gathered together all the possible bad news which she could collect, abused him and read him lectures with sisterly frankness, and always left him miserable for the day after "dearest William" had achieved the perusal of one of her epistles—the truth must be told that dearest William did not hurry himself to break the seal of Miss Dobbin's letter, but waited for a particularly favorable day and mood for doing so. A fortnight before, moreover, he had written to scold her for telling those absurd stories to Mrs. Osborne, and had dispatched a letter in reply to that lady, undeceiving her with respect to the reports concerning him and assuring her that he had "no sort of present intention of altering his condition."

Two or three nights after the arrival of the second packet of letters, the Major had passed the evening pretty cheerfully at Lady O'Dowd's house, where Glorvina thought that he listened with rather more attention than usual to the "Meeting of the Wathers," the "Minsthrel Boy" and one or two other specimens of song with which she favored him (the truth is, he was no more listening to Glorvina than to the howling of the jackals in the moonlight outside, and the delusion was hers as usual), and having played his game at chess with her (cribbage with the surgeon was Lady O'Dowd's favorite evening pastime), Major Dobbin took leave of the Colonel's family at his usual hour and retired to his own house.

There on his table his sister's letter lay reproaching him. He took it up, ashamed rather of his negligence regarding it, and prepared himself for a disagreeable hour's communing with that crabbed-handed absent relative. . . . It may have been an hour after the Major's departure from the Colonel's house—Sir Michael was sleeping the sleep of the just, Glorvina had arranged her black ringlets in the innumerable little bits of paper in which it was her habit to confine them, Lady O'Dowd too had gone to her bed in the nuptial chamber on the ground floor and had tucked her mosquito curtains round her fair form—when the guard at the gates of the commanding officer's compound beheld Major Dobbin in the moonlight rushing toward the house with a swift step and a very agitated countenance, and he passed the sentinel and went up to the windows of the Colonel's bedchamber.

"O'Dowd—Colonel!" said Dobbin, and kept up a great shouting.

"Heavens, Meejor!" said Glorvina of the curl papers, putting out her head too from her window.

"What is it, Dob, my boy?" said the Colonel, expecting there was a fire in the station, or that the route had come from headquarters.

"I—I must have leave of absence. I must go to England—on the most urgent private affairs," Dobbin said.

"Good heavens, what has happened!" thought Glorvina, trembling with all the papillotes.

"I want to be off—now—tonight," Dobbin continued, and the Colonel, getting up, came out to parley with him.

In the postscript of Miss Dobbin's crossed letter, the Major had just come upon a paragraph to the following effect: "I drove yesterday to see your old *acquaintance*, Mrs. Osborne. The wretched place they live at since they were bankrupts, you know—Mr. S, to judge from a *brass plate* on the door of his hut (it is little better) is a coal merchant. The little boy, your godson, is certainly a fine child, though forward and inclined to be saucy and self-willed. But we have taken notice of him as you wish it, and have introduced him to his aunt, Miss O, who was rather pleased with him. Perhaps his grandpapa—not the bankrupt one, who is almost doting, but Mr. Osborne, of Russell Square—may be induced to relent toward the child of your friend, *his erring and self-willed son*. And Amelia will not be ill-disposed to give him up. The widow is *consoled*, and is about to marry a reverend gentleman, the Reverend Mr. Binny, one of the curates of Brompton. A poor match. But Mrs. O is getting old, and I saw a great deal of gray in her hair—she was in very good spirits, and your little godson overate himself at our house. Mamma sends her love with that of your affectionate Ann Dobbin."

CHAPTER XLII

Our old friends the Crawleys' family house in Great Gaunt Street still bore over its front the hatchment which had been placed there as a token of mourning for Sir Pitt Crawley's demise, yet this heraldic emblem was in itself a very splendid and gaudy piece of furniture, and all the rest of the mansion became more brilliant than it had ever been during the late Baronet's reign. The black outer coating of the bricks was removed and they appeared with a cheerful blushing face streaked with white. The old bronze lions of the knocker were gilt handsomely, the railings painted, and the dismalest house in Great Gaunt Street became the smartest in the whole quarter before the green leaves in Hampshire had replaced those yellowing ones which were on the trees in Queen's Crawley avenue when old Sir Pitt Crawley passed under them for the last time.

A little woman, with a carriage to correspond, was perpetually seen about this mansion. An elderly spinster, accompanied by a little boy, also might be remarked coming thither daily. It was Miss Briggs and little Rawdon, whose business it was to see to the inward renovation of Sir Pitt's house, to superintend the female band engaged in stitching the blinds and hangings, to poke and rummage in the drawers and cupboards crammed with the dirty relics and congregated trumperies of a couple of generations of Lady Crawleys, and to take inventories of the china, the glass, and other properties in the closets and storerooms.

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was general in chief over these arrangements, with full orders from Sir Pitt to sell, barter, confiscate, or purchase furniture; and she enjoyed herself not a little in an occupation which gave full scope to her taste and ingenuity. The renovation of the house was determined upon when Sir Pitt came to town in November to see his lawyers, and when he passed nearly a week in Curzon Street, under the roof of his affectionate brother and sister.

He had put up at a hotel at first, but Becky, as soon as she heard of the Baronet's arrival, went off alone to greet him and returned in an hour to Curzon Street with Sir Pitt in the carriage by her side. It was impossible sometimes to resist this artless little creature's hospitalities, so kindly were they pressed, so frankly and amiably offered. Becky seized Pitt's hand in a transport of gratitude when he agreed to come. "Thank you," she said squeezing it and looking into the Baronet's eyes, who blushed a good deal. "How happy this will make Rawdon!" She bustled up to Pitt's bedroom, leading on the servants, who were carrying his trunks thither. She came in herself laughing with a coal scuttle out of her own room.

A fire was blazing already in Sir Pitt's apartment (it was Miss Briggs's room, by the way, who was sent upstairs to sleep with the maid). "I knew I should bring you," she said, with pleasure beaming in her glance. Indeed, she was really sincerely happy at having him for a guest.

Becky made Rawdon dine out once or twice on business while Pitt stayed with them, and the Baronet passed the happy evening alone with her and Briggs. She went downstairs to the kitchen and actually cooked little dishes for him. "Isn't it a good salmi?" she said. "I made it for you. I can make you better dishes than that, and will when you come to see me."

"Everything you do, you do well," said the Baronet, gallantly. "The salmi is excellent indeed."

"A poor man's wife," Rebecca replied, gaily, "must make herself useful, you know." On which her brother-in-law vowed that she was "fit to be the wife of an emperor," and that "to be skillful in domestic duties" was "surely one of the most charming of woman's qualities." And Sir Pitt thought, with something like mortification, of Lady Jane at home, and of a certain pie which she had insisted on making and serving to him at dinner—a most abominable pie.

Besides the salmi, which was made of Lord Steyne's pheasants from his lordship's cottage of Stillbrook, Becky gave her brother-in-law a bottle of white wine, some that Rawdon had brought with him from France and had picked up for nothing, the little storyteller said, whereas the liquor was in truth some White Hermitage from the Marquis of Steyne's famous cellars, which brought fire into the Baronet's pallid cheeks and a glow into his feeble frame.

Then when he had drunk up the bottle of *petit vin blanc*, she gave him her hand and took him up to the drawing-room and made him snug on the sofa by the fire, and let him talk as she listened with the tenderest kindly interest, sitting by him and hemming a shirt for her dear little boy. Whenever Mrs. Rawdon wished to be particularly humble and virtuous, this little shirt used to

come out of her workbox. It had got to be too small for Rawdon long before it was finished.

"I wish you could have got a little money out of him," Rawdon said to his wife moodily when the Baronet was gone. "I should like to give something to old Raggles, hanged if I shouldn't. It ain't right, you know, that the old fellow should be kept out of all his money. It may be inconvenient, and he might let to somebody else besides us, you know."

"Tell him," said Becky, "that as soon as Sir Pitt's affairs are settled, everybody will be paid, and give him a little something on account. Here's a check that Pitt left for the boy." And she took from her bag and gave her husband a paper which his brother had handed over to her on behalf of the little son and heir of the younger branch of the Crawleys.

The truth is, she had tried personally the ground on which her husband expressed a wish that she should venture—tried it ever so delicately, and found it unsafe. Even at a hint about embarrassments, Sir Pitt Crawley was off and alarmed. And he began a long speech explaining how straitened he himself was in money matters; how the tenants would not pay; how his father's affairs and the expenses attendant upon the demise of the old gentleman had involved him; how he wanted to pay off encumbrances; and how the bankers and agents were overdrawn. And Pitt Crawley ended by making a compromise with his sister-in-law, and giving her a very small sum for the benefit of her little boy.

And with regard to Becky, she was not a woman who expected too much from the generosity of her neighbors, and so was quite content with all that Pitt Crawley had done for her. She was acknowledged by the head of the family. If Pitt would not give her anything, he would get something for her some day. If she got no money from her brother-in-law, she got what was as good as money—credit. Raggles was made rather easy in his mind by the spectacle of the union between the brothers, by a small payment on the spot, and by the promise of a much larger sum speedily to be assigned to him. And Rebecca told Miss Briggs, whose Christmas dividend upon the little sum lent by her Becky paid with an air of candid joy and as if her exchequer was brimming over with gold—Rebecca, we say, told Miss Briggs, in strict confidence, that she had conferred with Sir Pitt, who was famous as a financier, on Briggs' special behalf, as to the most profitable investment of Miss B's remaining capital; that Sir Pitt, after much consideration, had thought of a most safe and advantageous way in which Briggs could lay out her money; that being especially interested in her as an attached friend of the late Miss Crawley, and of the whole family, and that long before he left town he had recommended that she should be ready with the money at a moment's notice, so as to purchase at the most favorable opportunity the shares which Sir Pitt had in his eye. Poor Miss Briggs was very grateful for this mark of Sir Pitt's attention—it came so unsolicited, she said, for she never should have thought of removing the money from the funds—and the delicacy enhanced the kindness of the office, and she promised to see her man of business immediately and be ready with her little cash at the proper hour.

And this worthy woman was so grateful for the kindness of Rebecca in the matter, and for that of her generous benefactor, the Colonel, that she went out and spent a great part of her half-year's dividend in the purchase of a black-velvet coat for little Rawdon, who, by-the-way, was grown almost too big for black velvet now, and was of a size and age befitting him for the assumption of the virile jacket and pantaloons.

He was a fine open-faced boy with blue eyes and waving flaxen hair, sturdy in limb, but generous and soft in heart—fondly attaching himself to all who were good to him—to the pony—to Lord Southdown, who gave him the horse (he used to blush and glow all over when he saw that kind young nobleman)—to the groom who had charge of the pony—to Molly, the cook, who crammed him with ghost stories at night and with good things from the dinner—to Briggs, whom he plagued and laughed at—and to his father especially, whose attachment toward the lad was curious too to witness. Here, as he grew to be about eight years old, his attachments may be said to have ended. The beautiful mother vision had faded away after awhile. During near two years she had scarcely spoken to the child. She disliked him. He had the measles and the whooping cough. He bored her. One day when he was standing at the landing place, having crept down from the upper regions attracted by the sound of his mother's voice, who was singing to Lord Steyne, the drawing-room door, opening suddenly, discovered the little spy, who but a moment before had been rapt in delight and listening to the music.

His mother came out and struck him violently a couple of boxes on the ear. He heard a laugh from the Marquis in the inner room (who was amused by this free and artless exhibition of Becky's temper), and fled down below to his friends of the kitchen, bursting into an agony of grief.

"It is not because it hurts me," little Rawdon gasped out—"only—only"—sobs and tears wound up the sentence in a storm. It was the little boy's heart that was bleeding. "Why mayn't I hear her singing? Why don't she ever sing to me, as she does to that bald-headed man with the large teeth?" He gasped out at various intervals these exclamations of rage and grief. The cook looked at the housemaid, the housemaid looked knowingly at the footman—the awful kitchen inquisition which sits in judgment in every house and knows everything sat on Rebecca at that moment.

After this incident, the mother's dislike increased to hatred. The consciousness that the child was in the house was a reproach and a pain to her. His very sight annoyed her. Fear, doubt, and resistance sprang up, too, in the boy's own bosom. They were separated from that day of the boxes on the ear.

Lord Steyne also heartily disliked the boy. When they met by mischance, he made sarcastic bows or remarks to the child, or glared at him with savage-looking eyes. Rawdon used to stare him in the face and double his little fists in return. He knew his enemy, and this gentleman, of all who came to the house, was the one who angered him most. One day the footman found him squaring his fists at Lord Steyne's hat in the hall. The footman told the circumstance as a good joke to Lord Steyne's coachman, that officer imparted it to Lord Steyne's gentleman and to the servants' hall in general. And very

soon afterward, when Mrs. Rawdon Crawley made her appearance at Gaunt House, the porter who unbarred the gates, the servants of all uniforms in the hall, the functionaries in white waistcoats who bawled out from landing to to landing the names of Colonel and Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, knew about her, or fancied they did. The man who brought her refreshment and stood behind her chair had talked her character over with the large gentleman in motley-colored clothes at his side.

A day or two before Christmas, Becky, her husband, and her son made ready and went to pass the holidays at the seat of their ancestors at Queen's Crawley. Becky would have liked to leave the little brat behind, and would have done so but for Lady Jane's urgent invitations to the youngster and the symptoms of revolt and discontent which Rawdon manifested at her neglect of her son. "He's the finest boy in England," the father said in a tone of reproach to her, "and you don't seem to care for him, Becky, as much as you do for your spaniel. He shan't bother you much. At home he will be away from you in the nursery, and he shall go outside on the coach with me."

"Where you go yourself because you want to smoke those filthy cigars," replied Mrs. Rawdon.

"I remember when you liked them, though," answered the husband.

Becky laughed. She was almost always good-humored. "That was when I was on my promotion, Goosey," she said. "Take Rawdon outside with you, and give him a cigar too, if you like."

Rawdon did not warm his little son for the winter's journey in this way, but he and Briggs wrapped up the child in shawls and comforters, and he was hoisted respectfully onto the roof of the coach in the dark morning, under the lamps of the White Horse Cellar; and with no small delight he watched the dawn rise, and made his first journey to the place which his father still called home. It was a journey of infinite pleasure to the boy, to whom the incidents of the road afforded endless interest, his father answering to him all questions connected with it, and telling him who lived in the great white house to the right and whom the park belonged to. His mother, inside the vehicle with her maid and her furs, her wrappers, and her scent bottles, made such a to-do that you would have thought she had never been in a stagecoach before—much less that she had been turned out of this very one to make room for a paying passenger on a certain journey performed some half-score years ago.

It was dark again when little Rawdon was wakened up to enter his uncle's carriage at Mudbury, and he sat and looked out of it wondering as the great iron gates flew open, and at the white trunks of the limes as they swept by until they stopped at length before the light windows of the Hall, which were blazing and comfortable with Christmas welcome. The hall door was flung open—a big fire was burning in the great old fireplace—a carpet was down over the checkered black flags. "It's the old turkey one that used to be in the ladies' gallery," thought Rebecca, and the next instant was kissing Lady Jane.

She and Sir Pitt performed the same salute with great gravity, but Rawdon,

having been smoking, hung back rather from his sister-in-law, whose two children came up to their cousin. And while Matilda held out her hand and kissed him, Pitt Binkie Southdown, the son and heir, stood aloof rather, and examined him as a little dog does a big dog.

Then the kind hostess conducted her guests to the snug apartments blazing with cheerful fires. Then the young ladies came and knocked at Mrs. Rawdon's door, under the pretense that they were desirous to be useful but in reality to have the pleasure of inspecting the contents of her band and bonnet boxes, and her dresses, which, though black, were of the newest London fashion. And they told how much the Hall was changed for the better, and how old Lady Southdown was gone, and how Pitt was taking his station in the county, as became a Crawley in fact. Then, the great dinner bell having rung, the family assembled at dinner, at which meal Rawdon Junior was placed by his aunt, the good-natured lady of the house, Sir Pitt being uncommonly attentive to his sister-in-law at his own right hand.

Little Rawdon exhibited a fine appetite, and showed a gentlemanlike behavior.

"I like to dine here," he said to his aunt when he had completed his meal, at the conclusion of which and after a decent grace by Sir Pitt the younger son and heir was introduced, and was perched on a high chair by the Baronet's side while the daughter took possession of the plate and the little wineglass prepared for her near her mother. "I like to dine here," said Rawdon Minor, looking up at his relation's kind face.

"Why?" said the good Lady Jane.

"I dine in the kitchen when I am at home," replied Rawdon Minor, "or else with Briggs." But Becky was so engaged with the Baronet, her host, pouring out a flood of compliments and delights and raptures, and admiring young Pitt Binkie, whom she declared to be the most beautiful, intelligent, noble-looking little creature and so like his father, that she did not hear the remarks of her own flesh and blood at the other end of the broad shining table.

As a guest, and it being the first night of his arrival, Rawdon the Second was allowed to sit up until the hour when, tea being over and a great gilt book being laid on the table before Sir Pitt, all the domestics of the family streamed in and Sir Pitt read prayers. It was the first time the poor little boy had ever witnessed or heard of such a ceremonial.

CHAPTER XLIII

Sir pitt crawley had done more than repair fences and restore dilapidated lodges on the Queen's Crawley estate. Like a wise man, he had set to work to rebuild the injured popularity of his house, and to stop up the gaps and ruins in which his name had been left by his disreputable and thriftless predecessor. He was elected for the borough speedily after his father's demise. A magistrate, a Member of Parliament, a county magnate, and representative of

an ancient family, he made it his duty to show himself before the Hampshire public, subscribed handsomely to the county charities, called assiduously upon all the county folks, and laid himself out, in a word, to take that position in Hampshire, and in the empire afterward, to which he thought his prodigious talents justly entitled him. Lady Jane was instructed to be friendly with the Fuddlestons, and the Wapshots, and the other famous baronets, their neighbors. Their carriages might frequently be seen in the Queen's Crawley avenue now; they dined pretty frequently at the Hall (where the cookery was so good that it was clear Lady Jane very seldom had a hand in it), and in return Pitt and his wife most energetically dined out in all sorts of weather and at all sorts of distances.

For though Pitt did not care for joviality, being a frigid man of poor health and appetite, yet he considered that to be hospitable and condescending was quite incumbent on his station, and every time that he got a headache from too long on after-dinner sitting, he felt that he was a martyr to duty. He talked about crops, Corn Laws, politics, with the best country gentlemen. He (who had been formerly inclined to be a sad freethinker on these points) entered into poaching and game-preserving with ardor. He didn't hunt—he wasn't a hunting man, he was a man of books and peaceful habits—but he thought that the breed of horses must be kept up in the country, and that the breed of foxes must therefore be looked to, and for his part, if his friend Sir Huddleston Fuddleston liked to draw his country, and meet as of old the F hounds used to do at Queen's Crawley, he should be happy to see him there, and the gentlemen of the Fuddleston hunt.

On Christmas Day a great family gathering took place. All the Crawleys from the rectory came to dine. Rebecca was as frank and fond of Mrs. Bute as if the other had never been her enemy. She was affectionately interested in the dear girls, and surprised at the progress which they made in music since her time, and insisted upon encoring one of the duets out of the great song-books which Jim, grumbling, had been forced to bring under his arm from the rectory. Mrs. Bute, perforce, was obliged to adopt a decent demeanor toward the little adventuress—of course being free to discourse with her daughters afterward about the absurd respect with which Sir Pitt treated his sister-in-law. But Jim, who had sat next to her at dinner, declared she was a trump, and one and all of the Rector's family agreed that the little Rawdon was a fine boy. They respected a possible baronet in the boy, between whom and the title there was only the little sickly pale Pitt Binkie.

Rawdon was fond of his sister-in-law for her regard for his son. Lady Jane and Becky did not get on *quite* so well at this visit as on occasion of the former one, when the Colonel's wife was bent upon pleasing. Those two speeches of the child struck rather a chill. Perhaps Sir Pitt was rather too attentive to her.

Lady Jane's sweetness and kindness had inspired Rebecca with such a contempt for her ladyship as the little woman found no small difficulty in concealing. That sort of goodness and simplicity which Lady Jane possessed annoyed our friend Becky, and it was impossible for her at times not to show,

or to let the other divine, her scorn. Her presence, too, rendered Lady Jane uneasy. Her husband talked constantly with Becky. Signs of intelligence seemed to pass between them, and Pitt spoke with her on subjects on which he never thought of discoursing with Lady Jane. The latter did not understand them, to be sure, but it was mortifying to remain silent, still more mortifying to know that you had nothing to say and hear that little audacious Mrs. Rawdon dashing on from subject to subject, with a word for every man and a joke always pat; and to sit in one's own house alone by the fireside and watching all the men round your rival.

In the country, when Lady Jane was telling stories to the children who clustered about her knees (little Rawdon into the bargain, who was very fond of her) and Becky came into the room, sneering with green, scornful eyes, poor Lady Jane grew silent under those baleful glances. Her simple little fancies shrank away tremulously, as fairies in the storybooks before a superior bad angel. She could not go on, although Rebecca, with the smallest inflection of sarcasm in her voice, besought her to continue that charming story. And on her side, gentle thoughts and simple pleasures were odious to Mrs. Becky—they discorded with her, she hated people for liking them, she spurned children and children-lovers. "I have no taste for bread and butter," she would say when caricaturing Lady Jane and her ways to my Lord Steyne.

"No more has a certain person for holy water," his lordship replied with a bow and a grin, and a great jarring laugh afterward.

So these two ladies did not see much of each other, except upon those occasions when the younger brother's wife, having an object to gain from the other, frequented her. They my-loved and my-deared each other assiduously, but kept apart generally, whereas Sir Pitt, in the midst of his multiplied avocations, found daily time to see his sister-in-law.

On the occasion of his first Speaker's dinner, Sir Pitt took the opportunity of appearing before his sister-in-law in his new uniform—that old diplomatic suit which he had worn when attaché to the Pumpernickel legation.

Becky complimented him upon that dress, and admired him almost as much as his own wife and children, to whom he displayed himself before he set out. She said that it was only the thoroughbred gentleman that could wear the Court suit with advantage, it was only your men of ancient race whom the *culotte courte* became. Pitt looked down with complacency at his legs, which had not, in truth, much more symmetry or swell than the lean Court sword which dangled by his side—looked down at his legs and thought in his heart that he was killing.

When he was gone, Mrs. Becky made a caricature of his figure, which she showed to Lord Steyne when he arrived. His lordship carried off the sketch, delighted with the accuracy of the resemblance. He had done Sir Pitt Crawley the honor to meet him at Mrs. Becky's house, and had been most gracious to the new Baronet and Member. Pitt was struck, too, by the deference with which the great peer treated his sister-in-law, by her ease and sprightliness in the conversation, and by the delight with which the other men of the party listened to her talk. Lord Steyne made no doubt but that the Baronet had

only commenced his career in public life, and expected rather anxiously to hear him as an orator. As they were neighbors (for Great Gaunt Street leads into Gaunt Square, whereof Gaunt House, as everybody knows, forms one side), my lord hoped that as soon as Lady Steyne arrived in London she would have the honor of making the acquaintance of Lady Crawley. He left a card upon his neighbor in the course of a day or two, having never thought fit to notice his predecessor, though they had lived near each other for near a century past.

In the midst of these intrigues and fine parties and wise and brilliant personages, Rawdon felt himself more and more isolated every day. He was allowed to go to the club more, to dine abroad with bachelor friends, to come and go when he liked without any questions being asked. And he and Rawdon the younger many a time would walk to Gaunt Street and sit with the lady and the children there while Sir Pitt was closeted with Rebecca, on his way to the House or on his return from it.

The ex-Colonel would sit for hours in his brother's house very silent, and thinking and doing as little as possible. He was glad to be employed of an errand, to go and make inquiries about a horse or a servant, or to carve the roast mutton for the dinner of the children. He was beat and cowed into laziness and submission. Delilah had imprisoned him and cut his hair off, too. The bold and reckless young blood of ten years back was subjugated, and was turned into a torpid, submissive, middle-aged, stout gentleman.

And poor Lady Jane was aware that Rebecca had captivated her husband, although she and Mrs. Rawdon my-deared and my-loved each other every day they met.

CHAPTER XLIV

Our friends at Brompton were meanwhile passing their Christmas after their fashion and in a manner by no means too cheerful.

Out of the hundred pounds a year which was about the amount of her income, the widow Osborne had been in the habit of giving up nearly three-fourths to her father and mother for the expenses of herself and her little boy. With £120 more, supplied by Jos, this family of four people, attended by a single Irish servant who also did for Clapp and his wife, might manage to live in decent comfort through the year, and hold up their heads yet, and be able to give a friend a dish of tea still, after the storms and disappointments of their early life. Sedley still maintained his ascendancy over the family of Mr. Clapp, his ex-clerk. Clapp remembered the time when, sitting on the edge of the chair, he tossed off a bumper to the health of "Mrs. S, Miss Emmy, and Mr. Joseph in India" at the merchant's rich table in Russell Square. Time magnified the splendor of those recollections in the honest clerk's bosom. Whenever he came up from the kitchen parlor to the drawing-room and partook of tea or gin and water with Mr. Sedley, he would say, "This was not what you was accustomed to once, sir," and as gravely and reverentially drink

the health of the ladies as he had done in the days of their utmost prosperity. He thought Miss 'Melia's playing the divinest music ever performed, and her the finest lady. He never would sit down before Sedley at the club even, nor would he have that gentleman's character abused by any member of the society. He had seen the first men in London shaking hands with Mr. S, he said, He'd known him "in times when Rothschild might be seen on 'Change with him any day," and he "owed him personally everythink."

Out of the small residue of her income which Amelia kept back for herself, the widow had need of all the thrift and care possible in order to enable her to keep her darling boy dressed in such a manner as became George Osborne's son, and to defray the expenses of the little school to which, after much misgiving and reluctance and many secret pangs and fears on her own part, she had been induced to send the lad. She had sat up of nights conning lessons and spelling over crabbed grammars and geography books in order to teach them to Georgy. She had worked even at the Latin accidence, fondly hoping that she might be capable of instructing him in that language. To part with him all day, to send him out to the mercy of a schoolmaster's cane and his schoolfellows' roughness, was almost like weaning him over again to that weak mother so tremulous and full of sensibility. He, for his part, rushed off to the school with the utmost happiness. He was longing for the change. That childish gladness wounded his mother, who was herself so grieved to part with him. She would rather have had him more sorry, she thought, and then was deeply repentant within herself for daring to be so selfish as to wish her own son to be unhappy.

Georgy made great progress in the school, which was kept by a friend of his mother's constant admirer, the Reverend Mr. Binny. He brought home numberless prizes and testimonials of ability. He told his mother countless stories every night about his school companions; and what a fine fellow Lyons was and what a sneak Sniffin was; and how Steel's father actually supplied the meat for the establishment, whereas Golding's mother came in a carriage to fetch him every Saturday; and how Neat had straps to his trousers—might he have straps?—and how Bull Major was so strong (though only in Eutropius) that it was believed he could lick the usher, Mr. Ward himself. So Amelia learned to know every one of the boys in that school as well as Georgy himself, and of nights she used to help him in his exercises and puzzle her little head over his lessons as eagerly as if she was herself going in the morning into the presence of the master.

In these quiet labors and harmless cares the gentle widow's life was passing away, a silver hair or two marking the progress of time on her head and a line deepening ever so little on her fair forehead. She used to smile at these marks of time. "What matters it," she asked, "for an old woman like me?" All she hoped for was to see her son great, famous, and glorious, as he deserved to be. She kept his copybooks, his drawings and compositions, and showed them about in her little circle as if they were miracles of genius. She confided some of these specimens to Miss Dobbin, to show them to Miss Osborne, George's aunt, to show them to Mr. Osborne himself—to make that

old man repent of his cruelty and ill feeling toward him who was gone. All her husband's faults and foibles she had buried in the grave with him. She only remembered the lover who had married her at all sacrifices, the noble husband so brave and beautiful in whose arms she had hung on the morning when he had gone away to fight and die gloriously for his king. From Heaven the hero must be smiling down upon that paragon of a boy whom he had left to comfort and console her.

We have seen how one of George's grandfathers (Mr. Osborne), in his easy chair in Russell Square, daily grew more violent and moody, and how his daughter, with her fine carriage and her fine horses and her name on half the public charity lists of the town, was a lonely, miserable, persecuted old maid. She thought again and again of the beautiful little boy, her brother's son, whom she had seen. She longed to be allowed to drive in the fine carriage to the house in which he lived, and she used to look out day after day as she took her solitary drive in the Park, in hopes that she might see him. Her sister, the banker's lady, occasionally condescended to pay her old home and companion a visit in Russell Square. She brought a couple of sickly children attended by a prim nurse, and in a faint genteel giggling tone cackled to her sister about her fine acquaintances, and how her little Frederick was the image of Lord Claud Lollypop, and her sweet Maria had been noticed by the Baroness as they were driving in their donkey chaise at Roehampton. She urged her to make her papa do something for the darlings. Frederick she had determined should go into the Guards, and if they made an elder son of him (and Mr. Bullock was positively ruining and pinching himself to death to buy land), how was the darling girl to be provided for?

Every visit which this leader of *ton* paid to her family was more unlucky for her. Her father paid more money into Stumpy & Rowdy's. Her patronage became more and more insufferable. The poor widow in the little cottage at Brompton, guarding her treasure there, little knew how eagerly some people coveted it.

On that night when Jane Osborne had told her father that she had seen his grandson, the old man had made her no reply, but he had shown no anger—and had bade her good night on going himself to his room in rather a kindly voice. And he must have meditated on what she said, and have made some inquiries of the Dobbin family regarding her visit, for a fortnight after it took place he asked her where was her little French watch and chain she used to wear?

"I bought it with my money, sir," she said in a great fright.

"Go and order another like it, or a better if you can get it," said the old gentleman, and lapsed again into silence.

Of late the Misses Dobbin more than once repeated their entreaties to Amelia to allow George to visit them. His aunt had shown her inclination, perhaps his grandfather himself, they hinted, might be disposed to be reconciled to him. Surely Amelia could not refuse such advantageous chances for the boy. Nor could she, but she acceded to their overtures with a very heavy and suspicious heart, was always uneasy during the child's absence from her,

and welcomed him back as if he was rescued out of some danger. He brought back money and toys, at which the widow looked with alarm and jealousy. She asked always if he had seen any gentlemen. Only old Sir William, who drove him about in the four-wheeled chaise, and Mr. Dobbin, who arrived on the beautiful bay horse in the afternoon—in the green coat and pink neck-cloth, with the gold-headed whip, who promised to show him the Tower of London and take him out with the Surrey hounds. At last he said, "There *was* an old gentleman, with thick eyebrows and a broad hat and large chains and seals." He came one day as the coachman was lunging Georgy round the lawn on the gray pony. "He looked at me very much. He shook very much. I said 'My name is Norval' after dinner. My aunt began to cry. She is always crying." Such was George's report on that night.

Then Amelia knew that the boy had seen his grandfather, and looked out feverishly for a proposal which she was sure would follow, and which came, in fact, in a few days afterward. Mr. Osborne formally offered to take the boy and make him heir to the fortune which he had intended that his father should inherit. He would make Mrs. George Osborne an allowance such as to assure her a decent competency. If Mrs. George Osborne proposed to marry again, as Mr. O heard was her intention, he would not withdraw that allowance. But it must be understood that the child would live entirely with his grandfather in Russell Square, or at whatever other place Mr. O should select, and that he would be occasionally permitted to see Mrs. George Osborne at her own residence. This message was brought or read to her in a letter one day when her mother was from home and her father absent, as usual, in the City.

She was never seen angry but twice or thrice in her life, and it was in one of these moods that Mr. Osborne's attorney had the fortune to behold her. She rose up trembling and flushing very much as soon as, after reading the letter, Mr. Poe handed it to her, and she tore the paper into a hundred fragments, which she trod on. "I marry again!—I take money to part from my child! Who dares insult me by proposing such a thing? Tell Mr. Osborne it is a cowardly letter, sir—a cowardly letter—I will not answer it. I wish you good morning, sir." "And she bowed me out of the room like a tragedy queen," said the lawyer, who told the story.

Her parents never remarked her agitation on that day, and she never told them of the interview. They had their own affairs, which deeply interested this innocent and unconscious lady. The old gentleman, her father, was always dabbling in speculation. We have seen how the wine company and the coal company had failed him. But, prowling about the city always eagerly and restlessly still, he lighted upon some other scheme, of which he thought so well that he embarked in it in spite of the remonstrances of Mr. Clapp, to whom indeed he never dared to tell how far he had engaged himself in it. And as it was always Mr. Sedley's maxim not to talk about money matters before women, they had no inkling of the misfortunes that were in store for them until the unhappy old gentleman was forced to make gradual confessions.

The bills of the little household, which had been settled weekly, first fell

nto arrear. The remittances had not arrived from India, Mr. Sedley told his wife with a disturbed face. As she had paid her bills very regularly hitherto, one or two of the tradesmen to whom the poor lady was obliged to go round asking for time were very angry at a delay to which they were perfectly used from more irregular customers. Emmy's contribution, paid over cheerfully without any questions, kept the little company in half-rations, however. And the first six months passed away pretty easily, old Sedley still keeping up with the notion that his shares must rise and that all would be well.

No sixty pounds, however, came to help the household at the end of the half-year, and it fell deeper and deeper into trouble. Mrs. Sedley, who was growing infirm and was much shaken, remained silent or wept a great deal with Mrs. Clapp in the kitchen. The butcher was particularly surly, the grocer insolent. Once or twice little Georgy had grumbled about the dinners, and Amelia, who still would have been satisfied with a slice of bread for her own dinner, could not but perceive that her son was neglected and purchased little things out of her private purse to keep the boy in health.

At last they told her, or told her such a garbled story as people in difficulties tell. One day, her own money having been received and Amelia about to pay it over, she, who had kept an account of the moneys expended by her, proposed to keep a certain portion back out of her dividend, having contracted engagements for a new suit for Georgy.

Then it came out that Jos's remittances were not paid, that the house was in difficulties, which Amelia ought to have seen before, her mother said, but she cared for nothing or nobody except Georgy. At this she passed all her money across the table without a word to her mother, and returned to her room to cry her eyes out. She had a great access of sensibility, too, that day when obliged to go and countermand the clothes, the darling clothes on which she had set her heart for Christmas Day, and the cut and fashion of which she had arranged in many conversations with a small milliner, her friend.

Hardest of all, she had to break the matter to Georgy, who made a loud outcry. Everybody had new clothes at Christmas. The others would laugh at him. He *would* have new clothes. She had promised them to him. The poor widow had only kisses to give him. She darned the old suit in tears. She cast about among her little ornaments to see if she could sell anything to procure the desired novelties. There was her India shawl that Dobbin had sent her. She remembered in former days going with her mother to a fine India shop on Ludgate Hill where the ladies had all sorts of dealings and bargains in these articles. Her cheeks flushed and her eyes shone with pleasure as she thought of this resource, and she kissed away George to school in the morning, smiling brightly after him. The boy felt that there was good news in her look.

Packing up her shawl in a handkerchief (another of the gifts of the good Major), she hid them under her cloak and walked flushed and eager all the way to Ludgate Hill, tripping along by the Park wall and running over the crossings, so that many a man turned as she hurried by him and looked after her rosy, pretty face. She calculated how she should spend the proceeds of

her shawl—how, besides the clothes, she would buy the books that he longed for and pay his half-year's schooling, and how she would buy a cloak for her father instead of that old greatcoat which he wore. She was not mistaken as to the value of the Major's gift. It was a very fine and beautiful web, and the merchant made a very good bargain when he gave her twenty guineas for her shawl.

She ran on amazed and flurried with her riches to Darton's shop in St. Paul's Churchyard, and there purchased the *Parents' Assistant*, and the *Sanford and Merton* Georgy longed for, and got into the coach there with her parcel and went home exulting. And she pleased herself by writing in the flyleaf, in the neatest little hand, "George Osborne, A Christmas gift from his affectionate mother." The books are extant to this day with the fair, delicate superscription.

She was going from her own room, with the books in her hand to place them on George's table, where he might find them on his return from school, when in the passage she and her mother met. The gilt bindings of the seven handsome little volumes caught the old lady's eye.

"What are those?" she said.

"Some books for Georgy," Amelia replied. "I—I promised them to him at Christmas."

"Books!" cried the elder lady, indignantly, "Books, when the whole house wants bread! Books, when to keep you and your son in luxury, and your dear father out of jail, I've sold every trinket I had, the India shawl from my back—even down to the very spoons—that our tradesmen mightn't insult us and that Mr. Clapp, which indeed he is justly entitled, being not a hard landlord and a civil man and a father, might have his rent. Oh, Amelia! You break my heart with your books, and that boy of yours, whom you are ruining, though part with him you will not. Oh, Amelia! May God send you a more dutiful child than I have had! There's Jos deserts his father in his old age, and there's George, who might be provided for and who might be rich, going to school like a lord with a gold watch and chain round his neck while my dear, dear old man is without a sh—shilling." Hysteric sobs and cries ended Mrs. Sedley's speech. It echoed through every room in the small house, whereof the other female inmates heard every word of the colloquy.

"Oh, Mother, Mother!" cried the poor Amelia in reply. "You told me nothing. I—I promised him the books. I—I only sold my shawl this morning. Take the money—take everything." And with quivering hands she took out her silver and her sovereigns—her precious golden sovereigns—which she thrust into the hands of her mother, whence they overflowed and tumbled rolling down the stairs.

And then she went into her room and sank down in despair and utter misery. She saw it all now. Her selfishness was sacrificing the boy. But for her he might have wealth, station, education, and his father's place, which the elder George had forfeited for her sake. She had but to speak the words and her father was restored to competency, and the boy raised to fortune. Oh, what a conviction it was to that tender and stricken heart!

CHAPTER XLV

All the world knows that Lord Steyne's town palace stands in Gaunt Square, out of which Great Gaunt Street leads, whither we first conducted Rebecca in the time of the departed Sir Pitt Crawley. Peering over the railings and through the black trees into the garden of the square, you see a few miserable governesses with wan-faced pupils wandering round and round it, and round the dreary grassplot in the center of which rises the statue of Lord Gaunt, who fought at Minden, in a three-tailed wig and otherwise habited like a Roman emperor. Gaunt House occupies nearly a side of the square. The remaining three sides are composed of mansions that have passed away into dowagerism—tall dark houses with window frames of stone, or picked out of a lighter red. Little light seems to be behind those lean, comfortless casements now, and hospitality to have passed away from those doors as much as the laced lackeys and linkboys of old times, who used to put out their torches in the blank iron extinguishers that still flank the lamps over the steps. Brass plates have penetrated into the square—doctors, the Diddlesex Bank Western Branch—the English and European Reunion, etc.—it has a dreary look, nor is my Lord Steyne's palace less dreary. All I have ever seen of it is the vast wall in front, with the rustic columns at the great gate, through which an old porter peers sometimes with a fat and gloomy red face—and over the wall the garret and bedroom windows and the chimney out of which there seldom comes any smoke now. For the present Lord Steyne lives at Naples, preferring the view of the bay and Capri and Vesuvius to the dreary aspect of the wall in Gaunt Square.

A few-score yards down New Gaunt Street, and leading into Gaunt Mews indeed, is a little modest back door which you would not remark from that of any of the other stables. But many a little close carriage had stopped at that door, as my informant (little Tom Eaves, who knows everything, and who showed me the place) told me. "The Prince and Perdita have been in and out of that door, sir," he has often told me. "Marianne Clarke has entered it with the Duke of ——. It conducts to the famous *petits appartements* of Lord Steyne—one, sir, fitted up all in ivory and white satin, another in ebony and black velvet. There is a little banqueting room taken from Sallust's house at Pompeii and painted by Cosway—a little private kitchen, in which every saucepan was silver and all the spits were gold."

Besides his town palace, the Marquis has castles and palaces in various quarters of the three kingdoms, whereof the descriptions may be found in the roadbooks—Castle Strongbow, with its woods, on the Shannon shore; Gaunt Castle in Carmarthenshire, where Richard II was taken prisoner; Gauntly Hall in Yorkshire, where I have been informed there were two hundred silver teapots for the breakfasts of the guests of the house, with everything to correspond in splendor; and Stillbrook in Hampshire, which

was my lord's farm, a humble place of residence of which we all remembe the wonderful furniture which was sold at my lord's demise by a late cele brated auctioneer.

My Lord Gaunt married, as every person who frequents the peerage know the Lady Blanche Thistlewood, a daughter of the noble house of Bareacre before mentioned in this veracious history. A wing of Gaunt House wa assigned to this couple, for the head of the family chose to govern it, an while he reigned to reign supreme; his son and heir, however, living little a home, disagreeing with his wife, borrowing upon post-obit such moneys a he required beyond the very moderate sums which his father was dispose to allow him. The Marquis knew every shilling of his son's debts. At hi lamented demise he was found himself to be the possessor of many of hi heir's bonds purchased for their benefit, and devised by his lordship to th children of his youngest son.

As to my Lord Gaunt's dismay, and the chuckling delight of his natura enemy and father, the Lady Gaunt had no children, the Lord George Gaun was desired to return from Vienna, where he was engaged in waltzing an diplomacy, and to contract a matrimonial alliance with the Honorable Joan only daughter of John Johnes, First Baron Helvellyn, and head of the firm of Jones, Brown & Robinson of Threadneedle Street, bankers, from whic union sprang several sons and daughters, whose doings do not appertain t this story.

The marriage at first was a happy and prosperous one. My Lord Georg Gaunt could not only read but write pretty correctly. He spoke French wit considerable fluency, and was one of the finest waltzers in Europe. With thes talents, and his interest at home, there was little doubt that his lordship woul rise to the highest dignities in his profession. The lady his wife felt that Court were her sphere, and her wealth enabled her to receive splendidly in thos Continental towns whither her husband's diplomatic duties led him. Then was talk of appointing him Minister, and bets were laid at the Travelers' tha he would be ambassador ere long, when of a sudden rumors arrived of th secretary's extraordinary behavior. At a grand diplomatic dinner given b his chief, he had started up and declared that a *pâté de foie gras* was poisoned He went to a ball at the hotel of the Bavarian envoy, the Count de Springbock Hohenlaufen, with his head shaved, and dressed as a Capuchin friar. It wa not a masked ball, as some folks wanted to persuade you. It was something queer, people whispered. His grandfather was so. It was in the family.

His wife and family returned to this country and took up their abode a Gaunt House. Lord George gave up his post on the European continent, an was gazetted to Brazil. But people knew better—he never returned from tha Brazil expedition—never died there—never lived there—never was there at all He was nowhere, he was gone out altogther. "Brazil," said one gossip to an other with a grin, "Brazil is St. John's Wood. Rio Janeiro is a cottage sur rounded by four walls, and George Gaunt is accredited to a keeper who ha invested him with the order of the Strait Waistcoat." These are the kinds o epitaphs which men pass over one another in Vanity Fair.

It was the mysterious taint of the blood; the poor mother had brought it from her own ancient race. The evil had broken out once or twice in the father's family, long before Lady Steyne's sins had begun, or her fasts and tears and penances had been offered in their expiation. The pride of the rake was struck down as the firstborn of Pharaoh. The dark mark of the fate and doom was on the threshold—the tall old threshold surmounted by coronets and carved heraldry.

The absent lord's children meanwhile prattled and grew on, quite unconscious that the doom was over them too. First they talked of their father, and devised plans against his return. Then the name of the living dead man was less frequently in their mouths—then not mentioned at all. But the stricken old grandmother trembled to think that these too were the inheritors of their father's shame as well as of his honors, and watched sickening for the day when the awful ancestral curse should come down on them.

This dark presentiment also haunted Lord Steyne. He tried to lay the horrid bedside ghost in Red Seas of wine and jollity, and lost sight of it sometimes in the crowd and rout of his pleasures. But it always came back to him when alone, and seemed to grow more threatening with years. "I have taken your son," it said. "Why not you? I may shut you up in a prison some day, like your son George. I may tap you on the head tomorrow, and away go pleasure, and honors, feasts and beauty, friends, flatterers, French cooks, fine horses and houses—in exchange for a prison, a keeper, and a straw mattress like George Gaunt's." And then my lord would defy the ghost that threatened him, for he knew of a remedy by which he could balk his enemy.

So there was splendor and wealth, but no great happiness perchance, behind the tall carved portals of Gaunt House with its smoky coronets and ciphers. The feasts there were of the grandest in London, but there was not overmuch content therewith, except among the guests who sat at my lord's table. Had he not been so great a prince very few possibly would have visited him, but in Vanity Fair the sins of very great personages are looked at indulgently. "*Nous regardons à deux fois*" (as the French lady said) before we condemn a person of my lord's undoubted quality. Some notorious carpers and squeamish moralists might be sulky with Lord Steyne, but they were glad enough to come when he asked them.

CHAPTER XLVI

At last Becky's kindness and attention to the chief of her husband's family were destined to meet with an exceeding great reward—a reward which, though certainly somewhat unsubstantial, the little woman coveted with greater eagerness than more positive benefits. If she did not wish to lead a virtuous life, at least she desired to enjoy a character for virtue, and we know that no lady in the genteel world can possess this desideratum until she has put on a train and feathers and has been presented to her sovereign at Court.

From that august interview they come out stamped as honest women. The Lord Chamberlain gives them a certificate of virtue. And as dubious goods or letters are passed through an oven at quarantine, sprinkled with aromatic vinegar, and then pronounced clean, many a lady whose reputation would be doubtful otherwise and liable to give infection passes through the wholesome ordeal of the royal presence and issues from it free from all taint.

It might be very well for my Lady Bareacres, my Lady Tufto, Mrs. Bute Crawley in the country, and other ladies who had come into contact with Mrs. Rawdon Crawley to cry fie at the idea of the odious little adventuress making her curtsy before the sovereign, and to declare that if dear good Queen Charlotte had been alive, *she* never would have admitted such an extremely ill-regulated personage into her chaste drawing-room. But when we consider that it was the First Gentleman in Europe in whose high presence Mrs. Rawdon passed her examination and, as it were, took her degree in reputation, it surely must be flat disloyalty to doubt any more about her virtue. I, for my part, look back with love and awe to that great character in history. Ah, what a high and noble appreciation of gentlewomanhood there must have been in Vanity Fair when that revered and august being was invested, by the universal acclaim of the refined and educated portion of this empire, with the title of Premier Gentilhomme of his kingdom.

Well, there came a happy day in Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's existence when this angel was admitted into the paradise of a Court which she coveted, her sister-in-law acting as her godmother. On the appointed day, Sir Pitt and his lady in their great family carriage (just newly built and ready for the Baronet's assumption of the office of High Sheriff of his county) drove up to the little house in Curzon Street, to the edification of Raggles, who was watching from his greengrocer's shop and saw fine plumes within and enormous bunches of flowers in the breasts of the new livery coats of the footmen.

Sir Pitt, in a glittering uniform, descended and went into Curzon Street, his sword between his legs. Little Rawdon stood with his face against the parlor windowpanes, smiling and nodding with all his might to his aunt in the carriage within; and presently Sir Pitt issued forth from the house again leading forth a lady with grand feathers, covered in a white shawl and holding up daintily a train of magnificent brocade. She stepped into the vehicle as if she were a princess and accustomed all her life to go to Court, smiling graciously on the footman at the door and on Sir Pitt, who followed her into the carriage.

Then Rawdon followed in his old Guards' uniform, which had grown woefully shabby and was much too tight. He was to have followed the procession and waited upon his sovereign in a cab but that his good-natured sister-in-law insisted that they should be a family party. The coach was large, the ladies not very big, they would hold their trains in their laps—finally, the four went fraternally together, and their carriage presently joined the line of royal equipages which was making its way down Piccadilly and St. James's Street toward the old brick palace where the Star of Brunswick was in waiting to receive his nobles and gentlefolk.

Becky felt as if she could bless the people out of the carriage windows, so elated was she in spirit and so strong a sense had she of the dignified position which she had at last attained in life. Even our Becky had her weaknesses, and as one often sees how men pride themselves upon excellencies which others are slow to perceive—how, for instance, Comus firmly believes that he is the greatest tragic actor in England; how Brown, the famous novelist, longs to be considered not a man of genius, but a man of fashion, while Robinson, the great lawyer, does not in the least care about his reputation in Westminster Hall, but believes himself incomparable across country, and at a five-barred gate—so to be, and to be thought, a respectable woman was Becky's aim in life, and she got up the genteel with amazing assiduity, readiness, and success. We have said there were times when she believed herself to be a fine lady, and forgot that there was no money in the chest at home—duns round the gate, tradesmen to coax and wheedle, no ground to walk upon, in a word. And as she went to Court in the carriage she adopted a demeanor so grand, self-satisfied, deliberate, and imposing that it made even Lady Jane laugh. She walked into the royal apartments with a toss of the head which would have befitted an empress, and I have no doubt had she been one, she would have become the character perfectly.

We are authorized to state that Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's *costume de cour* on the occasion of her presentation to the sovereign was of the most elegant and brilliant description.

And the diamonds. "Where the doose did you get the diamonds, Becky?" said her husband, admiring some jewels which he had never seen before, and which sparkled in her ears and on her neck with brilliance and profusion.

Becky blushed a little, and looked at him hard for a moment. Pitt Crawley blushed a little too, and looked out of the window. The fact is, he had given her a very small portion of the brilliants, a pretty diamond clasp which confined a pearl necklace which she wore, and the Baronet had omitted to mention the circumstance to his lady.

Becky looked at her husband, and then at Sir Pitt, with an air of saucy triumph—as much as to say, "Shall I betray you?"

"Guess!" she said to her husband. "Why, you silly man," she continued, "where do you suppose I got them?—all except the little clasp, which a dear friend of mine gave me long ago. I hired them, to be sure. I hired them at Mr. Polonius's, in Coventry Street. You don't suppose that all the diamonds which go to Court belong to the owners, like those beautiful stones which Lady Jane has, and which are much handsomer than any which I have, I am certain."

"They are family jewels," said Sir Pitt, again looking uneasy. And in this family conversation the carriage rolled down the street until its cargo was finally discharged at the gates of the palace where the sovereign was sitting in state.

The diamonds which had created Rawdon's admiration never went back to Mr. Polonius of Coventry Street, and that gentleman never applied for their restoration, but they retired into a little private repository in an old desk which Amelia Sedley had given her years and years ago, and in which

Becky kept a number of useful and perhaps valuable things about which he husband knew nothing.

Thus Rawdon knew nothing about the brilliant diamond earrings, or th superb brilliant ornament which decorated the fair bosom of his lady; bu Lord Steyne, who was in his place at Court as Lord of the Powder Closet an one of the great dignitaries and illustrious defenses of the throne of Englan and came up with all his Stars, Garters, collars, and cordons, and paid pa ticular attention to the little woman, knew whence the jewels came, and wh paid for them.

As he bowed over her he smiled and quoted the hackneyed and beautifu lines from "The Rape of the Lock" about Belinda's diamonds, "which Jew might kiss and infidels adore."

"But I hope your lordship is orthodox," said the little lady, with a toss o her head. And many ladies round about whispered and talked, and man gentlemen nodded and whispered as they saw what marked attention th great nobleman was paying to the little adventuress.

What were the circumstances of the interview between Rebecca Crawley née Sharp, and her imperial master it does not become such a feeble an inexperienced pen as mine to attempt to relate. The dazzled eyes close befor that magnificent idea. Loyal respect and decency tell even the imaginatio not to look too keenly and audaciously about the sacred audience chamber but to back away rapidly, silently and respectfully, making profound bow out of the august presence.

This may be said, that in all London there was no more loyal heart tha Becky's after this interview. The name of her King was always on her lips and he was proclaimed by her to be the most charming of men. She wen to Colnaghi's and ordered the finest portrait of him that art had produce and credit could supply. She chose that famous one in which the best of mon archs is represented in a frock coat with a fur collar, and breeches and sil stockings, simpering on a sofa from under his curly brown wig. She had hi painted in a brooch and wore it—indeed she amused and somewhat pestere her acquaintances with her perpetual talk about his urbanity and beauty Who knows? Perhaps the little woman thought she might play the part of Maintenon or a Pompadour.

The particulars of Becky's costume were in the newspaper—feathers, lap pets, superb diamonds, and all the rest. Mrs. Crackenbury read the paragrap in bitterness of spirit, and discoursed to her followers about the airs which tha woman was giving herself. Mrs. Bute Crawley and her young ladies in th country had a copy of the *Morning Post* from town, and gave a vent to thei honest indignation. "If you had been sandy-haired, green-eyed, and a Frenc rope dancer's daughter," Mrs. Bute said to her eldest girl (who on the con trary was a very swarthy, short, and snub-nosed young lady), "you migh have had superb diamonds, forsooth, and have been presented at Court b your cousin, the Lady Jane. But you're only a gentlewoman, my poor dea child. You have only some of the best blood in England in your veins, an good principles and piety for your portion. I myself, the wife of a baronet'

younger brother too, never thought of such a thing as going to Court—nor would other people if good Queen Charlotte had been alive." In this way the worthy Rectoress consoled herself, and her daughters sighed, and sat over the *Peerage* all night.

A few days after the famous presentation, another great and exceeding honor was vouchsafed to the virtuous Becky. Lady Steyne's carriage drove up to Mr. Rawdon Crawley's door, and the footman, instead of driving down the front of the house, as by his tremendous knocking he appeared to be inclined to do, relented, and only delivered in a couple of cards, on which were engraven the names of the Marchioness of Steyne and the Countess of Gaunt. If these bits of pasteboard had been beautiful pictures, or had had a hundred yards of Malines lace rolled round them worth twice the number of guineas, Becky could not have regarded them with more pleasure. You may be sure they occupied a conspicuous place in the china bowl on the drawing-room table where Becky kept the cards of her visitors. Lord! lord! how poor Mrs. Washington White's card and Mrs. Crackenbury's card, which our little friend had been glad enough to get a few months back, and of which the silly little creature was rather proud once—Lord! lord! I say, how soon at the appearance of these grand court cards did those poor little neglected deuces sink down to the bottom of the pack. Steyne! Bareacres, Johnes of Helvellyn! and Caerlyon of Camelot! We may be sure that Becky and Briggs looked out those august names in the *Peerage*, and followed the noble races up through all the ramifications of the family tree.

My Lord Steyne, coming to call a couple of hours afterward and looking about him and observing everything as was his wont, found his ladies' cards already ranged as the trumps of Becky's hand, and grinned, as this old cynic always did at any naïve display of human weakness. Becky came down to him presently. Whenever the dear girl expected his lordship, her toilet was prepared, her hair in perfect order, her mouchoirs, aprons, scarfs, little morocco slippers, and other female gimcracks arranged, and she seated in some artless and agreeable posture ready to receive him. Whenever she was surprised, of course she had to fly to her apartment to take a rapid survey of matters in the glass, and to trip down again to wait upon the great peer.

She found him grinning over the bowl. She was discovered, and she blushed a little. "Thank you, monseigneur," she said. "You see your ladies have been here. How good of you! I couldn't come before—I was in the kitchen making a pudding."

"I know you were, I saw you through the area railings as I drove up," replied the old gentleman.

"You see everything," she replied.

"A few things, but not that, my pretty lady," he said good-naturedly. "You silly little fibster! I heard you in the room overhead, where I have no doubt you were putting a little rouge on—you must give some of yours to my Lady Gaunt, whose complexion is quite preposterous—and I heard the bedroom door open, and then you came downstairs."

"Is it a crime to try and look my best when *you* come here?" answered Mrs.

Rawdon plaintively, and she rubbed her cheek with her handkerchief as if to show there was no rouge at all, only genuine blushes and modesty in her case. About this who can tell? I know there is some rouge that won't come off on a pocket handkerchief, and some so good that even tears will not disturb it.

"Well," said the old gentleman, twiddling round his wife's card, "you are bent on becoming a fine lady. You pester my poor old life out to get you into the world. You won't be able to hold your own there, you silly little fool! You've got no money."

"You will get us a place," interposed Becky, "as quick as possible."

"You've got no money, and you want to compete with those who have. You poor little earthenware pipkin, you want to swim down the stream along with the great copper kettles. All women are alike. Everybody is striving for what is not worth the having. Gad! I dined with the King yesterday, and we had neck of mutton and turnips. A dinner of herbs is better than a stalled ox very often. You will go to Gaunt House. You give an old fellow no rest until you get there. It's not half so nice as here. You'll be bored there. I am. My wife is as gay as Lady Macbeth, and my daughters as cheerful as Regan and Goneril. I daren't sleep in what they call my bedroom. The bed is like the baldaquin of St. Peter's, and the pictures frighten me. I have a little brass bed in a dressing room, and a little hair mattress like an anchorite. I am an anchorite. Ho! ho! You'll be asked to dinner next week. And *gare aux femmes*—look out and hold your own! How the women will bully you!" This was a very long speech for a man of few words like my Lord Steyne, nor was it the first which he uttered for Becky's benefit on that day.

Briggs looked up from the work table at which she was seated in the further room and gave a deep sigh as she heard the great Marquis speak so lightly of her sex.

"If you don't turn off that abominable sheep dog," said Lord Steyne, with a savage look over his shoulder at her, "I will have her poisoned."

"I always give my dog dinner from my own plate," said Rebecca, laughing mischievously. And having enjoyed for some time the discomfiture of my lord, who hated poor Briggs for interrupting his tête-à-tête with the fair Colonel's wife, Mrs. Rawdon at length had pity upon her admirer and, calling to Briggs, praised the fineness of the weather to her and bade her to take out the child for a walk.

"I can't send her away," Becky said presently, after a pause and in a very sad voice. Her eyes filled with tears as she spoke, and she turned away her head.

"You owe her her wages, I suppose?" said the peer.

"Worse than that," said Becky, still casting down her eyes. "I have ruined her."

"Ruined her?—Then why don't you turn her out?" the gentleman asked.

"Men do that," Becky answered bitterly. "Women are not so bad as you. Last year when we were reduced to our last guinea, she gave us everything.

She shall never leave me until we are ruined utterly ourselves, which does not seem far off, or until I can pay her the utmost farthing."

"— it, how much is it?" said the peer, with an oath. And Becky, reflecting on the largeness of his means, mentioned not only the sum which she had borrowed from Miss Briggs, but one of nearly double the amount.

This caused the Lord Steyne to break out in another brief and energetic expression of anger, at which Rebecca held down her head the more, and cried bitterly. "I could not help it. It was my only chance. I dare not tell my husband. He would kill me if I told him what I have done. I have kept it a secret from everybody but you—and you forced it from me. Ah, what shall I do, Lord Steyne? For I am very, very unhappy!"

Lord Steyne made no reply except by beating the devil's tattoo and biting his nails. At last he clapped his hat on his head and flung out of the room. Rebecca did not rise from her attitude of misery until the door slammed upon him and his carriage whirled away. Then she rose up with the queerest expression of virtuous mischief glittering in her green eyes. She burst out laughing once or twice to herself as she sat at work, and sitting down to the piano, she rattled away a triumphant voluntary on the keys which made the people pause under her window to listen to her brilliant music.

That night there came two notes from Gaunt House for the little woman, the one containing a card of invitation from Lord and Lady Steyne to a dinner at Gaunt House next Friday, while the other enclosed a slip of gray paper bearing Lord Steyne's signature and the address of Messrs. Jones, Brown, & Robinson, Lombard Street.

Rawdon heard Becky laughing in the night once or twice. It was only her delight at going to Gaunt House and facing the ladies there, she said, which amused her so. But the truth was that she was occupied with a great number of other thoughts. Should she pay off old Briggs and give her her congé? Should she astonish Raggles by settling his account? She turned over all these thoughts on her pillow, and on the next day, when Rawdon went out to pay his morning visit to the club, Mrs. Crawley (in a modest dress with a veil on) whipped off in a hackney coach to the City, and being landed at Messrs. Jones & Robinson's bank, presented a document there to the authority at the desk, who, in reply, asked her how she would take it.

She gently said she would take a hundred and fifty pounds in small notes and the remainder in one note, and passing through St. Paul's Churchyard, stopped there and bought the handsomest black-silk gown for Briggs which money could buy, and which, with a kiss and the kindest speeches, she presented to the simple old spinster.

Then she walked to Mr. Raggles, inquired about his children affectionately, and gave him fifty pounds on account. Then she went to the livery man from whom she jobbed her carriages and gratified him with a similar sum. "And I hope this will be a lesson to you, Spavin," she said, "and that on the next drawing-room day my brother, Sir Pitt, will not be inconvenienced by being obliged to take four of us in his carriage to wait upon His Majesty because my *own* carriage is not forthcoming." It appears there had been a difference

on the last drawing-room day. Hence the degradation which the Colonel had almost suffered, of being obliged to enter the presence of his sovereign in a hack cab.

These arrangements concluded, Becky paid a visit upstairs to the before-mentioned desk which Amelia Sedley had given her years ago, and which contained a number of useful and valuable little things, in which private museum she placed the one note which Messrs. Jones & Robinson's cashier had given her.

CHAPTER XLVII

When the ladies of Gaunt House were at breakfast that morning, Lord Steyne (who took his chocolate in private, and seldom disturbed the females of his household, or saw them except upon public days or when they crossed each other in the hall or when from his pit box at the opera he surveyed them in their box on the grand tier)—his lordship, we say, appeared among the ladies and the children who were assembled over the tea and toast, and a battle royal ensued apropos of Rebecca.

"My Lady Steyne," he said, "I want to see the list for your dinner on Friday, and I want you, if you please, to write a card for Colonel and Mrs. Crawley."

"Blanche writes them," Lady Steyne said in a flutter. "Lady Gaunt writes them."

"I will not write to that person," Lady Gaunt said, a tall and stately lady, who looked up for an instant and then down again after she had spoken. It was not good to meet Lord Steyne's eyes for those who had offended him.

"Send the children out of the room. Go!" said he, pulling at the bell rope. The urchins, always frightened before him, retired, their mother would have followed too. "Not you," he said. "You stop.

"My Lady Steyne," he said, "once more, will you have the goodness to go to the desk and write that card for your dinner on Friday?"

"My lord, I will not be present at it," Lady Gaunt said. "I will go home."

"I wish you would, and stay there. You will find the bailiffs at Bareacres very pleasant company, and I shall be freed from lending money to your relations, and from your own damned tragedy airs. Who are you to give orders here? You have no money. You've got no brains. You were here to have children and you have not had any. Gaunt's tired of you, and George's wife is the only person in the family who doesn't wish you were dead. Gaunt would marry again if you were."

"I wish I were," her ladyship answered, with tears and rage in her eyes.

"You, forsooth, must give yourself airs of virtue while my wife, who is an immaculate saint, as everybody knows, and never did wrong in her life, has no objection to meet my young friend Mrs. Crawley. My Lady Steyne knows that appearances are sometimes against the best of women, that lies are often told about the most innocent of them. Pray, madam, shall I tell you some little anecdotes about my Lady Bareacres, your mamma?"

"You may strike me if you like, sir, or hit any cruel blow," Lady Gaunt said. To see his wife and daughter suffering always put his lordship in a good humor.

"My sweet Blanche," he said, "I am a gentleman, and never lay my hand upon a woman save in the way of kindness. I only wish to correct little faults in your character. You women are too proud, and sadly lack humility, as Father Mole, I'm sure, would tell my Lady Steyne if he were here. You mustn't give yourselves airs, you must be meek and humble, my blessings. For all Lady Steyne knows this calumniated, simple, good-humored Mrs. Crawley is quite innocent—even more innocent than herself. Her husband's character is not good, but it is as good as Bareacres', who has played a little and not paid a great deal, who cheated you out of the only legacy you ever had and left you a pauper on my hands. And Mrs. Crawley is not very well born, but she is not worse than Fanny's illustrious ancestor, the first De la Jones."

"The money which I brought into the family, sir," Lady George cried out——

"You purchased a contingent reversion with it," the Marquis said darkly. "If Gaunt dies, your husband may come to his honors, your little boys may inherit them, and who knows what besides? In the meanwhile, ladies, be as proud and virtuous as you like abroad, but don't give *me* any airs. As for Mrs. Crawley's character, I shan't demean myself or that most spotless and perfectly irreproachable lady by even hinting that it requires a defense. You will be pleased to receive her with the utmost cordiality, as you will receive all persons whom I present in this house. This house?" He broke out with a laugh. "Who is the master of it? And what is it? This Temple of Virtue belongs to me. And if I invite all Newgate or all Bedlam here, by —— they shall be welcome."

After this vigorous allocution, to one of which sort Lord Steyne treated his "harem" whenever symptoms of insubordination appeared in his household, the crestfallen women had nothing for it but to obey. Lady Gaunt wrote the invitation which his lordship required, and she and her mother-in-law drove in person, and with bitter and humiliated hearts, to leave the cards on Mrs. Rawdon the reception of which caused that innocent woman so much pleasure.

Severe, spotless, and beautiful, Lady Gaunt held the very highest rank in Vanity Fair. The distinguished courtesy with which Lord Steyne treated her charmed everybody who witnessed his behavior, caused the severest critics to admit how perfect a gentleman he was, and to own that his lordship's heart at least was in the right place.

The Colonel's countenance on coming into this polite society wore as many blushes as the face of a boy of sixteen assumes when he is confronted with his sisters' schoolfellows. It has been told before that honest Rawdon had not been much used at any period of his life to ladies' company. With the men at the club or the messroom, he was well enough, and could ride, bet, smoke, or play at billiards with the boldest of them. He had had his time for female friendships too, but that was twenty years ago, and the ladies were out of the rank

of those with whom Young Marlow in the comedy is represented as having been familiar before he became abashed in the presence of Miss Hardcastle. The times are such that one scarcely dares to allude to that kind of company which thousands of our young men in Vanity Fair are frequenting every day, which nightly fills casinos and dancing rooms, which is known to exist as well as the Ring in Hyde Park or the congregation at St. James's, but which the most squeamish if not the most moral of societies is determined to ignore. In a word, although Colonel Crawley was now five and forty years of age, it had not been his lot in life to meet with a half-dozen good women, besides his paragon of a wife. All except her and his kind sister Lady Jane, whose gentle nature had tamed and won him, scared the worthy Colonel, and on occasion of his first dinner at Gaunt House he was not heard to make a single remark except to state that the weather was very hot. Indeed Becky would have left him at home but that virtue ordained that her husband should be by her side to protect the timid and fluttering little creature on her first appearance in polite society.

On her first appearance Lord Steyne stepped forward, taking her hand and greeting her with great courtesy, and presenting her to Lady Steyne and their ladyships her daughters. Their ladyships made three stately curtsies, and the elder lady, to be sure, gave her hand to the newcomer, but it was as cold and lifeless as marble.

Becky took it, however, with great humility and, performing a reverence which would have done credit to the best dancing master, put herself at Lady Steyne's feet, as it were, by saying that his lordship had been her father's earliest friend and patron, and that she, Becky, had learned to honor and respect the Steyne family from the days of her childhood. The fact is that Lord Steyne had once purchased a couple of pictures of the late Sharp, and the affectionate orphan could never forget her gratitude for that favor.

But it was when the ladies were alone that Becky knew the tug of war would come. And then indeed the little woman found herself in such a situation as made her acknowledge the correctness of Lord Steyne's caution to her to beware of the society of ladies above her own sphere. As they say the persons who hate Irishmen most are Irishmen, so assuredly the greatest tyrants over women are women. When poor little Becky, alone with the ladies, went up to the fireplace whither the great ladies had repaired, the great ladies marched away and took possession of a table of drawings. When Becky followed them to the table of drawings, they dropped off one by one to the fire again. She tried to speak to one of the children (of whom she was commonly fond in public places), but Master George Gaunt was called away by his mamma, and the stranger was treated with such cruelty finally that even Lady Steyne herself pitied her and went up to speak to the friendless little woman.

"Lord Steyne," said her ladyship, as her wan cheeks glowed with a blush, "says you sing and play very beautifully, Mrs. Crawley—I wish you would do me the kindness to sing to me."

"I will do anything that may give pleasure to my Lord Steyne or to you," said Rebecca, sincerely grateful, and seating herself at the piano, began to sing.

She sang religious songs from Mozart, which had been early favorites of Lady Steyne, and with such sweetness and tenderness that the lady, lingering round the piano, sat down by its side and listened until the tears rolled down. It is true that the opposition ladies at the other end of the room kept up a loud and ceaseless buzzing and talking, but the Lady Steyne did not hear those rumors. She was a child again, and had wandered back through a forty years' wilderness to her convent garden. The chapel organ had pealed the same tones; the organist, the Sister whom she loved best of the community, had taught them to her in those early happy days. She was a girl once more, and the brief period of her happiness bloomed out again for an hour. She started when the jarring doors were flung open and with a loud laugh from Lord Steyne the men of the party entered full of gaiety.

He saw at a glance what had happened in his absence, and was grateful to his wife for once. He went and spoke to her, and called her by her Christian name, so as again to bring blushes to her pale face. "My wife says you have been singing like an angel," he said to Becky. Now there are angels of two kinds, and both sorts, it is said, are charming in their way.

Whatever the previous portion of the evening had been, the rest of that night was a great triumph for Becky. She sang her very best, and it was so good that every one of the men came and crowded round the piano. The women, her enemies, were left quite alone.

CHAPTER XLVIII

The Muse, whoever she be, who presides over this comic history must now descend from the genteel heights in which she has been soaring and have the goodness to drop down upon the lowly roof of John Sedley at Bro npton, and describe what events are taking place there. Here too in this humble tenement live care, and distrust, and dismay. Mrs. Clapp in the kitchen is grumbling in secret to her husband about the rent, and urging the good fellow to rebel against his old friend and patron and his present lodger. Mrs. Sedley has ceased to visit her landlady in the lower regions now, and indeed is in a position to patronize Mrs. Clapp no longer. How can one be condescending to a lady to whom one owes a matter of forty pounds, and who is perpetually throwing out hints for the money? The Irish maidservant has not altered in the least in her kind and respectful behavior; but Mrs. Sedley fancies that she is growing insolent and ungrateful and, as the guilty thief who fears each bush an officer, sees threatening innuendoes and hints of capture in all the girl's speeches and answers. Miss Clapp, grown quite a young woman now, is declared by the soured old lady to be an unbearable and impudent little minx. Why Amelia can be so fond of her, or have her in her room so much, or walk out with her so constantly, Mrs. Sedley cannot conceive. The bitterness of poverty has poisoned the life of the once cheerful and kindly woman. She is thankless for Amelia's constant and gentle bearing toward her, carps at her

for her efforts at kindness or service, rails at her for her silly pride in her child and her neglect of her parents. Georgy's house is not a very lively one since Uncle Jos's annuity has been withdrawn, and the little family are almost upon famine diet.

Amelia thinks, and thinks, and racks her brain to find some means of increasing the small pittance upon which the household is starving. Can she give lessons in anything? Paint card racks? Do fine work? She finds that women are working hard and better than she can for twopence a day. She buys a couple of begilt Bristol boards at the fancy stationer's and paints her very best upon them—a shepherd with a red waistcoat on one, and a pink face smiling in the midst of a pencil landscape; a shepherdess on the other crossing a little bridge, with a little dog, nicely shaded. The man of the Fancy Repository and Brompton Emporium of Fine Arts (of whom she bought the screens, vainly hoping that he would repurchase them when ornamented by her hand) can hardly hide the sneer with which he examines these feeble works of art. He looks askance at the lady who waits in the shop, and ties up the cards again in their envelope of whity-brown paper and hands them to the poor widow and Miss Clapp, who had never seen such beautiful things in her life, and had been quite confident that the man must give two guineas at least for the screens. They try at other shops in the interior of London, with faint, sickening hopes. "Don't want 'em," says one. "Be off," says another, fiercely. Three and sixpence have been spent in vain. The screens retire to Miss Clapp's bedroom, who persists in thinking them lovely.

She writes out a little card in her neatest hand, and after long thought and labor of composition, in which the public is informed that "A lady who has some time at her disposal wishes to undertake the education of some little girls, whom she would instruct in English, in French, in geography, in history, and in music—address A. O., at Mr. Brown's," and she confides the card to the gentleman of the Fine Art Repository, who consents to allow it to lie upon the counter, where it grows dingy and fly-blown. Amelia passes the door wistfully many a time, in hopes that Mr. Brown will have some news to give to her, but he never beckons her in. When she goes to make little purchases, there is no news for her. Poor simple lady, tender and weak—how are you to battle with the struggling, violent world?

She grows daily more careworn and sad, fixing upon her child alarmed eyes, whereof the little boy cannot interpret the expression. She starts up of a night and peeps into his room stealthily, to see that he is sleeping and not stolen away. She sleeps but little now. A constant thought and terror is haunting her. How she weeps and prays in the long, silent nights—how she tries to hide from herself the thought which will return to her, that she ought to part with the boy, that she is the only barrier between him and prosperity. She can't, she can't. Not now, at least. Some other day. Oh, it is too hard to think of and to bear!

A thought comes over her which makes her blush and turn from herself—her parents might keep the annuity, the curate would marry her and give a home to her and the boy. But George's picture and dearest memory are

there to rebuke her. Shame and love say no to the sacrifice. She shrinks from it as from something unholy, and such thoughts never found a resting place in that pure and gentle bosom.

At the beginning of the struggle she had written off a letter of tender supplication to her brother at Calcutta, imploring him not to withdraw the support which he had granted to their parents, and painting in terms of artless pathos their lonely and hapless condition. She did not know the truth of the matter. The payment of Jos's annuity was still regular, but it was a moneylender in the city who was receiving it; old Sedley had sold it for a sum of money wherewith to prosecute his bootless schemes. Emmy was calculating eagerly the time that would elapse before the letter would arrive and be answered. She had written down the date in her pocketbook of the day when she dispatched it. To her son's guardian, the good Major at Madras, she had not communicated any of her griefs and perplexities. She had not written to him since she wrote to congratulate him on his approaching marriage. She thought with sickening despondency that that friend—the only one, the one who had felt such a regard for her—was fallen away.

One day, when things had come to a very bad pass—when the creditors were pressing, the mother in hysteric grief, the father in more than usual gloom, the inmates of the family avoiding each other, each secretly oppressed with his private unhappiness and notion of wrong—the father and daughter happened to be left alone together, and Amelia thought to comfort her father by telling him what she had done. She had written to Joseph—an answer must come in three or four months. He was always generous, though careless. He could not refuse when he knew how straitened were the circumstances of his parents.

Then the old gentleman revealed the whole truth to her—that his son was still paying the annuity, which his own imprudence had flung away. He had not dared to tell it sooner. He thought Amelia's ghastly and terrified look when with a trembling, miserable voice he made the confession conveyed reproaches to him for his concealment. "Ah," said he, with quivering lips and turning away, "you despise your old father now!"

"O Papa! It is not that," Amelia cried out, falling on his neck and kissing him many times. "You are always good and kind. You did it for the best. It is not for the money—it is—Oh, my God, my God! have mercy upon me, and give me strength to bear this trial." And she kissed him again wildly, and went away.

Still the father did not know what that explanation meant, and the burst of anguish with which the poor girl left him. It was that she was conquered. The sentence was passed. The child must go from her—to others—to forget her. Her heart and her treasure—her joy, hope, love, worship—her God, almost! She must give him up, and then—and then she would go to George, and they would watch over the child and wait for him until he came to them in Heaven.

She put on her bonnet scarcely knowing what she did, and went out to walk in the lanes by which George used to come back from school, and where

she was in the habit of going on his return to meet the boy. It was May, a half-holiday. The leaves were all coming out, the weather was brilliant. The boy came running to her flushed with health, singing, his bundle of school-books hanging by a thong. There he was. Both her arms were round him. No, it was impossible. They could not be going to part. "What is the matter, Mother?" said he. "You look very pale."

"Nothing, my child," she said, and stooped down and kissed him.

Her mind being made up, the widow began to take such measures as seemed right to her for advancing the end which she proposed. One day Miss Osborne, in Russell Square (Amelia had not written the name or number of the house for ten years—her youth, her early story came back to her as she wrote the superscription)—one day Miss Osborne got a letter from Amelia which made her blush very much and look toward her father, sitting glooming in his place at the other end of the table.

In simple terms Amelia told her the reasons which had induced her to change her mind respecting her boy. Her father had met with fresh misfortunes which had entirely ruined him. Her own pittance was so small that it would barely enable her to support her parents, and would not suffice to give George the advantages which were his due. Great as her sufferings would be at parting with him, she would, by God's help, endure them for the boy's sake. She knew that those to whom he was going would do all in their power to make him happy. She described his disposition such as she fancied it—quick and impatient of control or harshness, easily to be moved by love and kindness. In a postscript she stipulated that she should have a written agreement that she should see the child as often as she wished—she could not part with him under any other terms.

"What? Mrs. Pride has come down, has she?" old Osborne said when with a tremulous eager voice Miss Osborne read him the letter. "Reg'lar starved out, hey? Ha, ha! I knew she would." He tried to keep his dignity and to read his paper as usual, but he could not follow it. He chuckled and swore to himself behind the sheet.

At last he flung it down, and scowling at his daughter as his wont was, went out of the room into his study adjoining, from whence he presently returned with a key. He flung it to Miss Osborne.

"Get the room over mine—his room that was—ready," he said. "Yes, sir," his daughter replied in a tremble. It was George's room. It had not been opened for more than ten years. Some of his clothes, papers, handkerchiefs, whips, and caps, fishing rods, and sporting gear were still there. An *Army List* of 1814, with his name written on the cover, a little dictionary he was wont to use in writing, and the Bible his mother had given him were on the mantelpiece, with a pair of spurs and a dried inkstand covered with the dust of ten years. Ah, since that ink was wet, what days and people had passed away! The writing book still on the table was blotted with his hand.

"You had better send that woman some money," Mr. Osborne said before he went out. "She shan't want for nothing. Send her a hundred pound."

"And I'll go and see her tomorrow?" Miss Osborne asked.

"That's your lookout. She don't come in here, mind. No, by—, not for all the money in London. But she mustn't want now. So look out, and get things right." With which brief speeches Mr. Osborne took leave of his daughter and went on his accustomed way into the city.

"Here, Papa, is some money," Amelia said that night, kissing the old man, her father, and putting a bill for a hundred pounds into his hands. "And—and, Mamma, don't be harsh with Georgy. He—he is not going to stop with us long." She could say nothing more, and walked away silently to her room. Let us close it upon her prayers and her sorrow. I think we had best speak little about so much love and grief.

Miss Osborne came the next day, according to her promise contained in her note, and saw Amelia. The meeting between them was friendly. A look and a few words from Miss Osborne showed the poor widow that with regard to this woman at least there need be no fear lest she should take the first place in her son's affection. She was cold, sensible, not unkind. The mother had not been so well pleased, perhaps, had the rival been better-looking, younger, more affectionate, warmer-hearted. Miss Osborne, on the other hand, thought of old times and memories, and could not but be touched with the poor mother's pitiful situation. She was conquered, and laying down her arms, as it were, she humbly submitted. That day they arranged together the preliminaries of the treaty of capitulation.

George was kept from school the next day and saw his aunt. Amelia left them alone together and went to her room. She was trying the separation, as that poor gentle Lady Jane Grey felt the edge of the ax that was to come down and sever her slender life. Days were passed in parleys, visits, preparations. The widow broke the matter to Georgy with great caution. She looked to see him very much affected by the intelligence. He was rather elated than otherwise, and the poor woman turned sadly away. He bragged about the news that day to the boys at school—told them how he was going to live with his grandpapa, his father's father, not the one who comes here sometimes, and that he would be very rich, and have a carriage and a pony, and go to a much finer school, and when he was rich he would buy Leader's pencil case and pay the tart woman. The boy was the image of his father, as his fond mother thought.

Indeed I have no heart, on account of our dear Amelia's sake, to go through the story of George's last days at home.

At last the day came, the carriage drove up, the little humble packets containing tokens of love and remembrance were ready and disposed in the hall long since. George was in his new suit, for which the tailor had come previously to measure him. He had sprung up with the sun and put on the new clothes, his mother hearing him from the room close by, in which she had been lying in speechless grief and watching. Days before she had been making preparations for the end, purchasing little stores for the boy's use, marking his books and linen, talking with him and preparing him for the change—fondly fancying that he needed preparation.

So that he had change, what cared he? He was longing for it. By a thousand

eager declarations as to what he would do when he went to live with his grandfather he had shown the poor widow how little the idea of parting had cast him down. He would come and see his mamma often on the pony, he said. He would come and fetch her in the carriage, they would drive in the Park, and she should have everything she wanted. The poor mother was fain to content herself with these selfish demonstrations of attachment, and tried to convince herself how sincerely her son loved her. He must love her. All children were so, a little anxious for novelty, and—no, not selfish, but self-willed. Her child must have his enjoyments and ambition in the world. She herself, by her own selfishness and imprudent love for him, had denied him his just rights and pleasures hitherto.

So poor Amelia had been getting ready in silent misery for her son's departure, and had passed many and many a long solitary hour in making preparations for the end. George stood by his mother watching her arrangements without the least concern. Tears had fallen into his boxes; passages had been scored in his favorite books; old toys, relics, treasures, had been hoarded away for him and packed with strange neatness and care—and of all these things the boy took no note. The child goes away smiling as the mother breaks her heart. By heavens, it is pitiful, the bootless love of women for children in Vanity Fair.

A few days are past, and the great event of Amelia's life is consummated. No angel has intervened. The child is sacrificed and offered up to fate, and the widow is quite alone.

The boy comes to see her often, to be sure. He rides on a pony with a coachman behind him, to the delight of his old Grandfather Sedley, who walks proudly down the lane by his side. She sees him, but he is not her boy any more. Why, he rides to see the boys at the little school, too, and to show off before them his new wealth and splendor. In two days he has adopted a slightly imperious air and patronizing manner. He was born to command, his mother thinks, as his father was before him.

It is fine weather now. Of evenings on the days when he does not come she takes a long walk into London—yes, as far as Russell Square, and rests on the stone by the railing of the garden opposite Mr. Osborne's house. It is so pleasant and cool. She can look up and see the drawing-room windows illuminated, and at about nine o'clock the chamber in the upper story where Georgy sleeps. She knows—he has told her. She prays there as the light goes out, prays with a humble humble heart, and walks home shrinking and silent. She is very tired when she comes home. Perhaps she will sleep the better for that long weary walk, and she may dream about Georgy.

CHAPTER XLIX

After Becky's appearance at my Lord Steyne's private and select parties, the claims of that estimable woman as regards fashion were settled, and some of

the very greatest and tallest doors in the metropolis were speedily opened to her—doors so great and tall that the beloved reader and writer hereof may hope in vain to enter at them. Dear brethren, let us tremble before those august portals. I fancy them guarded by grooms of the chamber with flaming silver forks, with which they prong all those who have not the right of the entrée. They say the honest newspaper fellow who sits in the hall and takes down the names of the great ones who are admitted to the feasts dies after a little time. He can't survive the glare of fashion long. It scorches him up, as the presence of Jupiter in full dress wasted that poor imprudent Semele—a giddy moth of a creature who ruined herself by venturing out of her natural atmosphere. Her myth ought to be taken to heart among the Tyburnians, the Belgravians—her story, and perhaps Becky's too. Ah, ladies!—Ask the Reverend Mr. Thurifer if Belgravia is not a sounding brass and Tyburnia a tinkling cymbal. These are vanities. Even these will pass away. And some day or other (but it will be after our time, thank goodness), Hyde Park Gardens will be no more better known than the celebrated horticultural outskirts of Babylon, and Belgrave Square will be as desolate as Baker Street or Tadmor in the wilderness.

The upshot of Becky's visit to Lord Steyne was that His Highness the Prince of Peterwaradin took occasion to renew his acquaintance with Colonel Crawley when they met on the next day at the club, and to compliment Mrs. Crawley in the Ring of Hyde Park with a profound salute of the hat. She and her husband were invited immediately to one of the Prince's small parties at Levant House, then occupied by His Highness during the temporary absence from England of its noble proprietor. She sang after dinner to a very little *comité*. The Marquis of Steyne was present, paternally superintending the progress of his pupil.

At Levant House Becky met one of the finest gentlemen and greatest Ministers that Europe has produced—the Duc de la Jabotière, then ambassador from the Most Christian King, and subsequently Minister to that monarch. I declare I swell with pride as these august names are transcribed by my pen, and I think in what brilliant company my dear Becky is moving. She became a constant guest at the French Embassy, where no party was considered to be complete without the presence of the charming Madame Ravdonn Cravley.

Messieurs de Truffigny (of the Périgord family) and Champignac, both attachés of the Embassy, were straightway smitten by the charms of the fair Colonel's wife, and both declared, according to the wont of their nation (for who ever yet met a Frenchman come out of England that has not left half a dozen families miserable, and brought away as many hearts in his pocket-book?)—both, I say, declared that they were *aux mieux* with the charming Madame Ravdonn.

And they talked English with adorable simplicity, and to the constant amusement of Becky and my Lord Steyne she would mimic one or other to his face, and compliment him on his advance in the English language with a gravity which never failed to tickle the Marquis, her sardonic old patron. Truffigny gave Briggs a shawl by way of winning over Becky's confidante,

and asked her to take charge of a letter which the simple spinster handed over in public to the person to whom it was addressed, and the composition of which amused everybody who read it greatly. Lord Steyne read it—everybody but honest Rawdon, to whom it was not necessary to tell everything that passed in the little house in Mayfair.

Here before long Becky received not only "the best" foreigners (as the phrase is in our noble and admirable society slang), but some of the best English people too. I don't mean the most virtuous, or indeed the least virtuous, or the cleverest, or the stupidest, or the richest, or the best-born, but "the best"—in a word, people about whom there is no question—such as the great Lady Fitz-Willis, that patron saint of Almack's, the great Lady Slowbore, the great Lady Grizzel Macbeth (she was Lady G. Glowry, daughter of Lord Grey of Glowry), and the like. When the Countess of Fitz-Willis (her ladyship is of the Kingstreet family, see Debrett and Burke) takes up a person, he or she is safe. There is no question about them any more. Not that my Lady Fitz-Willis is any better than anybody else, being on the contrary a faded person fifty-seven years of age, and neither handsome nor wealthy nor entertaining; but it is agreed on all sides that she is of the "best people." Those who go to her are of the best, and from an old grudge probably to Lady Steyne (for whose coronet her ladyship, then the youthful Georgina Frederica, daughter of the Prince of Wales's favorite, the Earl of Portansherry, had once tried), this great and famous leader of the fashion chose to acknowledge Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, made her a most marked courtesy at the assembly over which she presided, and not only encouraged her son, St. Kitts (his lordship got his place through Lord Steyne's interest), to frequent Mrs. Crawley's house, but asked her to her own mansion, and spoke to her twice in the most public and condescending manner during dinner.

The important fact was known all over London that night. People who had been crying fie about Mrs. Crawley were silent. Wenham, the wit and lawyer, Lord Steyne's right-hand man, went about everywhere praising her; some who had hesitated came forward at once and welcomed her; little Tom Toady, who had warned Southdown about visiting such an abandoned woman, now besought to be introduced to her. In a word, she was admitted to be among the "best" people. Ah, my beloved readers and brethren, do not envy poor Becky prematurely—glory like this is said to be fugitive. It is currently reported that even in the very inmost circles they are no happier than the poor wanderers outside the zone, and Becky, who penetrated into the very center of fashion, and saw the great George IV face to face, has owned since that there too was vanity.

Becky has often spoken in subsequent years of this season of her life, when she moved among the very greatest circles of the London fashion. Her success elated and then bored her. At first no occupation was more pleasant than to invent and procure (the latter a work of no small trouble and ingenuity, by the way, in a person of Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's very narrow means)—to procure, we say, the prettiest new dresses and ornaments; to drive to fine dinner parties, where she was welcomed by great people; and from the fine

dinner parties to fine assemblies, whither the same people came with whom she had been dining, whom she had met the night before, and would see on the morrow—the young men faultlessly appointed, handsomely cravated, with the neatest glossy boots and white gloves—the elders portly, brass-buttoned, noble-looking, polite, and prosy—the young ladies blonde, timid, and in pink—the mothers grand, beautiful, sumptuous, solemn, and in diamonds. They talked in English, not in bad French, as they do in the novels. They talked about each other's houses and characters and families just as the Joneses do about the Smiths. Becky's former acquaintances hated and envied her. The poor woman herself was yawning in spirit. "I wish I were out of it," she said to herself. "I would rather be a parson's wife and teach a Sunday school than this; or a sergeant's lady and ride in the regimental wagon; or, oh how much gayer it would be to wear spangles and trousers and dance before a booth at a fair!"

"You would do it very well," said Lord Steyne, laughing. She used to tell the great man her ennuis and perplexities in her artless way—they amused him.

"Rawdon would make a very good écuyer—master of the ceremonies—what do you call him—the man in the large boots and the uniform who goes round the ring cracking the whip? He is large, heavy, and of a military figure. I recollect," Becky continued, pensively, "my father took me to see a show at Brookgreen Fair when I was a child, and when we came home I made myself a pair of stilts and danced in the studio to the wonder of all the pupils."

"I should have liked to see it," said Lord Steyne.

"I should like to do it now," Becky continued. "How Lady Blinkey would open her eyes, and Lady Grizzel Macbeth would stare! Hush! Silence! There is Pasta beginning to sing." Becky always made a point of being conspicuously polite to the professional ladies and gentlemen who attended at these aristocratic parties—of following them into the corners where they sat in silence, and shaking hands with them, and smiling in the view of all persons. She was an artist herself, as she said very truly. There was a frankness and humility in the manner in which she acknowledged her origin which provoked, or disarmed, or amused lookers-on, as the case might be. "How cool that woman is," said one. "What airs of independence she assumes where she ought to sit still and be thankful if anybody speaks to her!" "What an honest and good-natured soul she is!" said another. "What an artful little minx!" said a third. They were all right, very likely, but Becky went her own way, and so fascinated the professional personages that they would leave off their sore throats in order to sing at her parties, and give her lessons for nothing.

Yes, she gave parties in the little house in Curzon Street. Many scores of carriages with blazing lamps blocked up the street, to the disgust of No. 100, who could not rest for the thunder of the knocking, and of 102, who could not sleep for envy. The gigantic footmen who accompanied the vehicles were too big to be contained in Becky's little hall, and were billeted off in the neighboring public houses, whence, when they were wanted, callboys summoned them from their beer. Scores of the great dandies of London squeezed and trod

on each other on the little stairs, laughing to find themselves there; and many spotless and severe ladies of *ton* were seated in the little drawing-room listening to the professional singers, who were singing according to their wont, and as if they wished to blow the windows down. And the day after there appeared among the fashionable *réunions* in the *Morning Post* a paragraph to the following effect:

"Yesterday Colonel and Mrs. Crawley entertained a select party at dinner at their house in Mayfair. Their Excellencies the Prince and Princess of Peterwaradin, H. E. Papoosh Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador (attended by Kibob Bey, dragoman of the mission), the Marquis of Steyne, Earl of Southdown, Sir Pitt and Lady Jane Crawley, Mr. Wagg, etc. After dinner Mrs. Crawley had an assembly which was attended by the Duchess (Dowager) of Stilton, Duc de la Gruyère, Marchioness of Cheshire, Marchese Alessandro Strachino, Comte de Brie, Baron Schapzuger, Chevalier Tosti, Countess of Slingstone, and Lady F. Macadam, Major-General and Lady G. Macbeth, and (2) Miss Macbeths; Viscount Paddington, Sir Horace Fogey, Hon. Sands Bedwin, Bobbachy Bahawder," and an etc., which the reader may fill at his pleasure through a dozen close lines of small type.

Lady Steyne, after the music scene, succumbed before Becky, and perhaps was not disinclined to her. The younger ladies of the House of Gaunt were also compelled into submission. Once or twice they set people at her, but they failed. The brilliant Lady Stunnington tried a passage of arms with her, but was routed with great slaughter by the intrepid little Becky. When attacked, sometimes Becky had a knack of adopting a demure ingénue air, under which she was most dangerous. She said the wickedest things with the most simple unaffected air when in this mood, and would take care artlessly to apologize for her blunders, so that all the world should know that she had made them.

Mr. Wagg, the celebrated wit and a led captain and trencherman of my Lord Steyne, was caused by the ladies to charge her, and the worthy fellow—leering at his patronesses and giving them a wink, as much as to say "Now look out for sport"—one evening began an assault upon Becky, who was unsuspiciously eating her dinner. The little woman, attacked on a sudden, but never without arms, lighted up in an instant, parried and riposted with a home thrust which made Wagg's face tingle with shame. Then she returned to her soup with the most perfect calm and a quiet smile on her face. Wagg's great patron, who gave him dinners and lent him a little money sometimes, and whose election, newspaper, and other jobs Wagg did, gave the luckless fellow such a savage glance with the eyes as almost made him slink under the table and burst into tears. He looked piteously at my lord, who never spoke to him during dinner, and at the ladies, who disowned him.

At last Becky herself took compassion upon him and tried to engage him in talk. He was not asked to dinner again for six weeks; and Fiche, my lord's confidential man, to whom Wagg naturally paid a good deal of court, was instructed to tell him that if he ever dared to say a rude thing to Mrs. Crawley again, or make her the butt of his stupid jokes, milor would put every

one of his notes of hand into his lawyer's hands and sell him up without mercy. Wagg wept before Fiche, and implored his dear friend to intercede for him. He wrote a poem in favor of Mrs. R. C., which appeared in the next number of the *Harumscarum Magazine*, which he conducted. He implored her goodwill at parties where he met her. He cringed and coaxed Rawdon at the club. He was allowed to come back to Gaunt House after a while. Becky was always good to him, always amused, never angry.

His lordship's vizier and chief confidential servant (with a seat in Parliament and at the dinner table), Mr. Wenham, was much more prudent in his behavior and opinions than Mr. Wagg. However much he might be disposed to hate all parvenus (Mr. Wenham himself was a stanch old True Blue Tory, and his father a small coal merchant in the north of England), this aide-de-camp of the Marquis never showed any sort of hostility to the new favorite, but pursued her with stealthy kindnesses and a sly and deferential politeness which somehow made Becky more uneasy than other people's overt hostilities.

How the Crawleys got the money which was spent upon the entertainments with which they treated the polite world was a mystery which gave rise to some conversation at the time, and probably added zest to these little festivities. Some persons averred that Sir Pitt Crawley gave his brother a handsome allowance. If he did, Becky's power over the Baronet must have been extraordinary indeed, and his character greatly changed in his advanced age. Other parties hinted that it was Becky's habit to levy contributions on all her husband's friends—going to this one in tears with an account that there was an execution in the house, falling on her knees to that one and declaring that the whole family must go to jail or commit suicide unless such and such a bill could be paid. Lord Southdown, it was said, had been induced to give many hundreds through these pathetic representations. Young Feltham of the —th Dragoons (and son of the firm of Tiler & Feltham, hatters and army accouterment makers), and whom the Crawleys introduced into fashionable life, was also cited as one of Becky's victims in the pecuniary way. People declared that she got money from various simply disposed persons under pretense of getting them confidential appointments under Government. Who knows what stories were or were not told of our dear and innocent friend? Certain it is that if she had had all the money which she was said to have begged or borrowed or stolen, she might have capitalized and been honest for life, whereas—but this is advancing matters.

The truth is that by economy and good management—by a sparing use of ready money and by paying scarcely anybody—people can manage, for a time at least, to make a great show with very little means. And it is our belief that Becky's much-talked-of parties, which were not, after all was said, very numerous, cost this lady very little more than the wax candles which lighted the walls. Stillbrook and Queen's Crawley supplied her with game and fruit in abundance. Lord Steyne's cellars were at her disposal, and that excellent nobleman's famous cook presided over her little kitchen, or sent by my lord's order the rarest delicacies from their own. I protest it is quite shameful in the world to abuse a simple creature as people of her time abuse Becky, and

I warn the public against believing one-tenth of the stories against her. If every person is to be banished from society who runs into debt and cannot pay—if we are to be peering into everybody's private life, speculating upon their income, and cutting them if we don't approve of their expenditure—why, what a howling wilderness and intolerable dwelling Vanity Fair would be! Every man's hand would be against his neighbor in this case, my dear sir, and the benefits of civilization would be done away with. We should be quarreling, abusing, avoiding one another. Our houses would become caverns, and we should go in rags because we cared for nobody. Rents would go down. Parties wouldn't be given any more. All the tradesmen of the town would be bankrupt. Wine, wax lights, comestibles, rouge, crinoline petticoats, diamonds, wigs, Louis Quatorze gimcracks, and old china, park hacks, and splendid high-stepping carriage horses—all the delights of life, I say—would go to the deuce if people did but act upon their silly principles and avoid those whom they dislike and abuse. Whereas by a little charity and mutual forbearance things are made to go on pleasantly enough. We may abuse a man as much as we like, and call him the greatest rascal unhanged—but do we wish to hang him therefore? No. We shake hands when we meet. If his cook is good, we forgive him and go and dine with him, and we expect he will do the same by us. Thus trade flourishes, civilization advances, peace is kept, new dresses are wanted for new assemblies every week, and the last year's vintage of Lafitte will remunerate the honest proprietor who reared it.

At the time whereof we are writing, though the Great George was on the throne and ladies wore gigots and large combs like tortoise-shell shovels in their hair instead of the simple sleeves and lovely wreaths which are actually in fashion, the manners of the very polite world were not, I take it, essentially different from those of the present day, and their amusements pretty similar. To us from the outside, gazing over the policeman's shoulders at the bewildering beauties as they pass into Court or hall, they may seem beings of unearthly splendor, and in the enjoyment of an exquisite happiness by us unattainable. It is to console some of these dissatisfied beings that we are narrating our dear Becky's struggles and triumphs and disappointments, of all of which, indeed, as is the case with all persons of merit, she had her share.

CHAPTER L

At this time the amiable amusement of acting charades had come among us from France, and was considerably in vogue in this country, enabling the many ladies among us who had beauty to display their charms, and the fewer number who had cleverness to exhibit their wit. Mr. Lord Steyne was incited by Becky, who perhaps believed herself endowed with both the above qualifications, to give an entertainment at Gaunt House which should include some of these little dramas—and we must take leave to introduce the reader to this brilliant *réunion,* and with a melancholy welcome too, for it will be among

the very last of the fashionable entertainments to which it will be our fortune to conduct him.

A portion of that splendid room, the picture gallery of Gaunt House, was arranged as the charade theater. It had been so used when George III was king, and a picture of the Marquis of Gaunt is still extant with his hair in powder and a pink ribbon—in a Roman shape, as it was called—enacting the part of Cato in Mr. Addison's tragedy of that name, performed before their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales, the Bishop of Osnaburgh, and Prince William Henry, then children like the actor. One or two of the old properties were drawn out of the garrets, where they had lain ever since, and furbished up anew for the present festivities.

Young Bedwin Sands, then an elegant dandy and Eastern traveler, was manager of the revels. An Eastern traveler was somebody in those days, and the adventurous Bedwin, who had published his quarto and passed some months under the tents in the desert, was a personage of no small importance. In this volume there were several pictures of Sands in various Oriental costumes, and he traveled about with a black attendant of most unprepossessing appearance, just like another Brian de Bois Guilbert. Bedwin, his costumes, and black man were hailed at Gaunt House as very valuable acquisitions.

He led off the first charade. A Turkish officer with an immense plume of feathers (the Janissaries were supposed to be still in existence, and the tarboosh had not as yet displaced the ancient and majestic headdress of the true believers) was seen couched on a divan and making believe to puff at a narghile, in which, however, for the sake of the ladies, only a fragrant pastile was allowed to smoke. The Turkish dignitary yawns and expresses signs of weariness and idleness. He claps his hands and Mesrour the Nubian appears, with bare arms, bangles, yataghans, and every Eastern ornament—gaunt, tall, and hideous. He makes a salaam before my lord the Aga.

A thrill of terror and delight runs through the assembly. The ladies whisper to one another. The black slave was given to Bedwin Sands by an Egyptian Pasha in exchange for three dozen of maraschino. He has sewn up ever so many odalisques in sacks and tilted them into the Nile.

"Bid the slave merchant enter," says the Turkish voluptuary with a wave of his hand. Mesrour conducts the slave merchant into my lord's presence. He brings a veiled female with him. He removes the veil. A thrill of applause bursts through the house. It is Mrs. Winkworth (she was a Miss Absolom) with the beautiful eyes and hair. She is in a gorgeous Oriental costume, the black braided locks are twined with innumerable jewels, her dress is covered over with gold piasters. The odious Mohammedan expresses himself charmed by her beauty. She falls down on her knees and entreats him to restore her to the mountains where she was born, and where her Circassian lover is still deploring the absence of his Zuleikah. No entreaties will move the obdurate Hassan. He laughs at the notion of the Circassian bridegroom. Zuleikah covers her face with her hands and drops down in an attitude of the most beautiful despair. There seems to be no hope for her, when—when the Kislar Aga appears.

The Kislar Aga brings a letter from the Sultan. Hassan receives and places on his head the dread firman. A ghastly terror seizes him, while on the Negro's face (it is Mesrour again in another costume) appears a ghastly joy. "Mercy! Mercy!" cried the Pasha, while the Kislar Aga, grinning horribly, pulls out—a *bowstring*. The curtain draws just as he is going to use that awful weapon. Hassan from within bawls out, "First two syllables"—and Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, who is going to act in the charade, comes forward and compliments Mrs. Winkworth on the admirable taste and beauty of her costume.

The second part of the charade takes place. It is still an Eastern scene. Hassan, in another dress, is in an attitude by Zuleikah, who is perfectly reconciled to him. The Kislar Aga has become a peaceful black slave. It is sunrise on the desert, and the Turks turn their heads eastward and bow to the sand. As there are no dromedaries at hand, the band facetiously plays "The Camels Are Coming." An enormous Egyptian head figures in the scene—it is a musical one—and to the surprise of the Oriental travelers, sings a comic song, composed by Mr. Wagg. The Eastern voyagers go off dancing, like Papageno and the Moorish king, in the *Magic Flute*. "Last two syllables!" roars the head.

The last act opens. It is a Grecian tent this time. A tall and stalwart man reposes on a couch there. Above him hang his helmet and shield. There is no need for them now. Ilium is down. Iphigenia is slain. Cassandra is a prisoner in his outer halls. The king of men (it is Colonel Crawley, who, indeed, has no notion about the sack of Ilium or the conquest of Cassandra), the *anax andrôn* is asleep in his chamber at Argos. A lamp casts the broad shadow of the sleeping warrior flickering on the wall—the sword and shield of Troy glitter in its light. The band plays the awful music of *Don Juan* before the statue enters.

Aegisthus steals in pale and on tiptoe. What is that ghastly face looking out balefully after him from behind the arras? He raises his dagger to strike the sleeper, who turns in his bed and opens his broad chest as if for the blow. He cannot strike the noble slumbering chieftain. Clytemnestra glides swiftly into the room like an apparition—her arms are bare and white, her tawny hair floats down her shoulders, her face is deadly pale, and her eyes are lighted up with a smile so ghastly that people quake as they look at her.

A tremor ran through the room. "Good God," somebody said, "it's Mrs. Rawdon Crawley!"

Scornfully she snatches the dagger out of Aegisthus's hand and advances to the bed. You see it shining over her head in the glimmer of the lamp, and—and the lamp goes out, with a groan, and all is dark.

The darkness and the scene frightened people. Rebecca performed her part so well, and with such ghastly truth, that the spectators were all dumb until, with a burst, all the lamps of the hall blazed out again, when everybody began to shout applause. "Brava! Brava!" old Steyne's strident voice was heard roaring over all the rest. "By —— she'd do it, too," he said between his teeth. The performers were called by the whole house, which sounded with cries of "Manager! Clytemnestra!" *Agamemnon* could not be got to show in his

classical tunic, but stood in the background with Aegisthus and others of the performers of the little play. Mr. Bedwin Sands led on Zuleikah and Clytemnestra. A great personage insisted on being presented to the charming Clytemnestra. "Heigh ha? Run him through the body. Marry somebody else, hay?" was the apposite remark made by his Royal Highness.

"Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was quite killing in the part," said Lord Steyne. Becky laughed, gay and saucy-looking, and swept the prettiest little curtsy ever seen.

Servants brought in salvers covered with numerous cold dainties, and the performers disappeared to get ready for the second charade tableau.

The three syllables of this charade were to be depicted in pantomime, and the performance took place in the following wise:

First syllable. Colonel Rawdon Crawley, C.B., with a slouched hat and a staff, a greatcoat, and a lantern borrowed from the stables, passed across the stage bawling out as if warning the inhabitants of the hour. In the lower window are seen two bagmen playing apparently at the game of cribbage, over which they yawn much. To them enters one looking like Boots (the Honorable G. Ringwood), which character the young gentleman performed to perfection, and divests them of their lower coverings, and presently Chambermaid (the Right Honorable Lord Southdown) with two candlesticks and a warming pan. She ascends to the upper apartment and warms the bed. She uses the warming pan as a weapon wherewith she wards off the attention of the bagmen. She exits. They put on their nightcaps and pull down the blinds. Boots comes out and closes the shutters of the ground-floor chamber. You hear him bolting and chaining the door within. All the lights go out. The music plays "*Dormez, dormez, chers amours.*" A voice from behind the curtain says, "First syllable."

Second syllable. The lamps are lighted up all of a sudden. The music plays the old air from John of Paris, "*Ah, quel plaisir d'être en voyage.*" It is the same scene. Between the first and second floors of the house represented, you behold a sign on which the Steyne arms are painted. All the bells are ringing all over the house. In the lower apartment you see a man with a long slip of paper presenting it to another, who shakes his fists, threatens, and vows that it is monstrous. "Ostler, bring round my gig," cries another at the door. He chucks Chambermaid (the Right Honorable Lord Southdown) under the chin; she seems to deplore his absence, as Calypso did that of that other eminent traveler Ulysses. Boots (the Honorable G. Ringwood) passes with a wooden box containing silver flagons, and cries "Pots" with such exquisite humor and naturalness that the whole house rings with applause, and a bouquet is thrown to him. Crack, crack, crack go the whips. Landlord, chambermaid, waiter rush to the door, but just as some distinguished guest is arriving the curtains close, and the invisible theatrical manager cries out, "Second syllable!"

"I think it must be 'Hotel,'" says Captain Grigg of the Life Guards. There is a general laugh at the captain's cleverness. He is not very far from the mark.

While the third syllable is in preparation, the band begins a nautical med-

ley—"All in the Downs," "Cease, Rude Boreas," "Rule Britannia," "In the Bay of Biscay, O!". Some maritime event is about to take place. A bell is heard ringing as the curtain draws aside. "Now, gents, for the shore!" a voice exclaims. People take leave of each other. They point anxiously as if toward the clouds, which are represented by a dark curtain, and they nod their heads in fear. Lady Squeams (the Right Honorable Lord Southdown), her lap dog, her bags, reticules, and husband, sit down and cling hold of some ropes. It is evidently a ship.

The Captain (Colonel Crawley, C.B.), with a cocked hat and a telescope, comes in holding his hat on his head, and looks out; his coattails fly about as if in the wind. When he leaves go of his hat to use his telescope, his hat flies off with immense applause. It is blowing fresh. The music arises and whistles louder and louder, the mariners go across the stage staggering as if the ship was in severe motion. The Steward (the Honorable G. Ringwood) passes reeling by holding six basins. He puts one rapidly by Lord Squeams—Lady Squeams, giving a pinch to her dog, which begins to howl piteously, puts her pocket handkerchief to her face and rushes away as for the cabin. The music rises up to the wildest pitch of stormy excitement, and the third syllable is concluded.

There was a little ballet, "Le Rossignol," in which Montessu and Noblet used to be famous in those days, and which Mr. Wagg transferred to the English stage as an opera, putting his verse, of which he was a skillful writer, to the pretty airs of the ballet. It was dressed in old French costume, and little Lord Southdown now appeared admirably attired in the disguise of an old woman hobbling about the stage with a faultless crooked stick.

Thrills of melody were heard behind the scenes, and gurgling from a sweet pasteboard cottage covered with roses and trellis work. "Philomèle, Philomèle!" cries the old woman, and Philomèle comes out.

More applause—it is Mrs. Rawdon Crawley in powder and patches, the most *ravissante* little Marquise in the world.

She comes in laughing, humming, and frisks about the stage with all the innocence of theatrical youth—she makes a curtsy. Mamma says, "Why, child, you are always laughing and singing," and away she goes, with:

THE ROSE UPON MY BALCONY

The rose upon my balcony, the morning air perfuming,
  Was leafless all the wintertime, and pining for the spring.
You ask me why her breath is sweet, and why her cheek is blooming,
  It is because the sun is out, and birds begin to sing.

The nightingale, whose melody is through the greenwood ringing,
  Was silent when the boughs were bare and winds were blowing keen.
And if, Mamma, you ask of me the reason of his singing,
  It is because the sun is out, and all the leaves are green.

Thus each performs his part, Mamma, the birds have found their voices,
The blowing rose a flush, Mamma, her bonny cheek to dye,
And there's sunshine in my heart, Mamma, which wakens and rejoices,
And so I sing and blush, Mamma, and that's the reason why.

During the intervals of the stanzas of this ditty, the good-natured personage addressed as Mamma by the singer, and whose large whiskers appeared under her cap, seemed very anxious to exhibit her maternal affection by embracing the innocent creature who performed the daughter's part. Every caress was received with loud acclamations of laughter by the sympathizing audience. At its conclusion (while the music was performing a symphony as if ever so many birds were warbling) the whole house was unanimous for an encore, and applause and bouquets without end were showered upon the nightingale of the evening. Lord Steyne's voice of applause was loudest of all. Becky, the nightingale, took the flowers which he threw to her and pressed them to her heart with the air of a consummate comedian. Lord Steyne was frantic with delight. His guests' enthusiasm harmonized with his own.

Where was the beautiful black-eyed houri whose appearance in the first charade had caused such delight? She was twice as handsome as Becky, but the brilliancy of the latter had quite eclipsed her. All voices were for her. Stephens, Caradori, Ronzi de Begnis—people compared her to one or the other, and agreed, with good reason very likely, that had she been an actress, none on the stage could have surpassed her. She had reached her culmination. Her voice rose thrilling and bright over the storm of applause, and soared as high and joyful as her triumph.

There was a ball after the dramatic entertainments, and everybody pressed round Becky as the great point of attraction of the evening. The Royal Personage declared with an oath that she was perfection, and engaged her again and again in conversation. Little Becky's soul swelled with pride and delight at these honors—she saw fortune, fame, fashion before her. Lord Steyne was her slave, followed her everywhere and scarcely spoke to anyone in the room beside, and paid her most marked compliments and attention. She still appeared in her Marquise costume and danced a minuet with Monsieur de Truffigny, Monsieur Le Duc de la Jabotière's attaché; and the Duke, who had all the traditions of the ancient Court, pronounced that Madame Crawley was worthy to have been a pupil of Vestris, or to have figured at Versailles. Only a feeling of dignity, the gout, and the strongest sense of duty and personal sacrifice prevented His Excellency from dancing with her himself; and he declared in public that a lady who could talk and dance like Mrs. Rawdon was fit to be ambassadress at any Court in Europe. He was only consoled when he heard that she was half a Frenchwoman by birth. "None but a compatriot," His Excellency declared, "could have performed that majestic dance in such a way."

Then she figured in a waltz with Monsieur de Klingenspohr, the Prince of Peterwaradin's cousin and attaché. The delighted Prince, having less *retenue* than his French diplomatic colleague, insisted upon taking a turn with the

charming creature, and twirled round the ballroom with her, scattering the diamonds out of his boot tassels and hussar jacket until His Highness was fairly out of breath. Papoosh Pasha himself would have liked to dance with her if that amusement had been the custom of his country. The company made a circle round her, and applauded as wildly as if she had been a Noblet or a Taglioni. Everybody was in ecstasy, and Becky too, you may be sure. She passed by Lady Stunnington with a look of scorn. She patronized Lady Gaunt and her astonished and mortified sister-in-law—she *écraséd* all rival charmers. As for poor Mrs. Winkworth, and her long hair and great eyes, which had made such an effect at the commencement of the evening—where was she now? Nowhere in the race. She might tear her long hair and cry her great eyes out, but there was not a person to heed or to deplore the discomfiture.

The greatest triumph of all was at suppertime. She was placed at the grand exclusive table with His Royal Highness, the exalted personage before mentioned, and the rest of the great guests. She was served on gold plate. She might have had pearls melted into her champagne if she liked—another Cleopatra—and the potentate of Peterwaradin would have given half the brilliants off his jacket for a kind glance from those dazzling eyes. Jabotière wrote home about her to his Government. The ladies of the other tables, who supped off mere silver, and marked Lord Steyne's constant attention to her, vowed it was a monstrous infatuation, a gross insult to ladies of rank. If sarcasm could have killed, Lady Stunnington would have slain her on the spot.

Rawdon Crawley was scared at these triumphs. They seemed to separate his wife further than ever from him somehow. He thought with a feeling very like pain how immeasurably she was his superior.

When the hour of departure came, a crowd of young men followed her to her carriage, for which the people without bawled—the cry being caught up by the linkmen who were stationed outside the tall gates of Gaunt House—congratulating each person who issued from the gate and hoping his lordship had enjoyed this noble party.

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's carriage, coming up to the gate after due shouting, rattled into the illuminated courtyard and drove up to the covered way. Rawdon put his wife into the carriage, which drove off. Mr. Wenham had proposed to him to walk home, and offered the Colonel the refreshment of a cigar.

They lighted their cigars by the lamp of one of the many linkboys outside, and Rawdon walked on with his friend Wenham. Two persons separated from the crowd and followed the two gentlemen, and when they had walked down Gaunt Square a few score of paces, one of the men came up and touching Rawdon on the shoulder, said, "Beg your pardon, Colonel, I wish to speak to you most particular." This gentleman's acquaintance gave a loud whistle as the latter spoke, at which signal a cab came clattering up from those stationed at the gate of the Gaunt House—and the aide-de-camp ran round and placed himself in front of Colonel Crawley. That gallant officer at once knew what had befallen him. He was in the hands of the bailiffs. He started back, falling against the man who had first touched him.

"We're three on us—it's no use bolting," the man behind said.

"It's you, Moss, is it?" said the Colonel, who appeared to know his interlocutor. "How much is it?"

"Only a small thing," whispered Mr. Moss of Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane, and assistant officer to the Sheriff of Middlesex. "One hundred and sixty-six, six and eightpence, at the suit of Mr. Nathan."

"Lend me a hundred, Wenham, for God's sake," poor Rawdon said. "I've got seventy at home."

"I've not got ten pounds in the world," said poor Mr. Wenham. "Good night, my dear fellow."

"Good night," said Rawdon ruefully. And Wenham walked away—and Rawdon Crawley finished his cigar as the cab drove under Temple Bar.

CHAPTER LI

When Lord Steyne was benevolently disposed, he did nothing by halves, and his kindness toward the Crawley family did the greatest honor to his benevolent discrimination. His lordship extended his goodwill to little Rawdon. He pointed out to the boy's parents the necessity of sending him to a public school, that he was of an age now when emulation, the first principles of the Latin language, pugilistic exercises, and the society of his fellow boys would be of the greatest benefit to the boy. His father objected that he was not rich enough to send the child to a good public school; his mother, that Briggs was a capital mistress for him and had brought him on (as indeed was the fact) famously in English, the Latin rudiments, and in general learning. But all these objections disappeared before the generous perseverance of the Marquis of Steyne. His lordship was one of the governors of that famous old collegiate institution called the Whitefriars. It had been a Cistercian convent in old days when the Smithfield, which is contiguous to it, was a tournament ground. Obstinate heretics used to be brought thither convenient for burning hard by. Henry VIII, the Defender of the Faith, seized upon the monastery and its possessions, and hanged and tortured some of the monks who could not accommodate themselves to the pace of his reform. Finally, a great merchant bought the house and land adjoining, in which, and with the help of other wealthy endowments of land and money, he established a famous foundation hospital for old men and children. An extern school grew round the old almost monastic foundation, which subsists still with its Middle-Age costume and usages—and all Cistercians pray that it may long flourish.

Of this famous house some of the greatest noblemen, prelates, and dignitaries in England are governors; and as the boys are very comfortably lodged, fed, and educated, and subsequently inducted to good scholarships at the university and livings in the Church, many little gentlemen are devoted to the ecclesiastical profession from their tenderest years, and there is considerable emulation to procure nominations for the foundation. It was originally intended for the sons of poor and deserving clerics and laics, but many of the

noble governors of the institution, with an enlarged and rather capricious benevolence, selected all sorts of objects for their bounty. To get an education for nothing, and a future livelihood and profession assured, was so excellent a scheme that some of the richest people did not disdain it, and not only great men's relations, but great men themselves, sent their sons to profit by the chance—Right Reverend prelates sent their own kinsmen or the sons of their clergy while, on the other hand, some great noblemen did not disdain to patronize the children of their confidential servants—so that a lad entering this establishment had every variety of youthful society wherewith to mingle.

Rawdon Crawley, though the only book which he studied was the *Racing Calendar*, and though his chief recollections of polite learning were connected with the floggings which he received at Eton in his early youth, had that decent and honest reverence for classical learning which all English gentlemen feel, and was glad to think that his son was to have a provision for life, perhaps, and a certain opportunity of becoming a scholar. And although his boy was his chief solace and companion, and endeared to him by a thousand small ties about which he did not care to speak to his wife, who had all along shown the utmost indifference to their son, yet Rawdon agreed at once to part with him, and to give up his own greatest comfort and benefit for the sake of the welfare of the little lad.

He did not know how fond he was of the child until it became necessary to let him go away. When he was gone, he felt more sad and downcast than he cared to own—far sadder than the boy himself, who was happy enough to enter a new career and find companions of his own age. Becky burst out laughing once or twice when the Colonel, in his clumsy, incoherent way, tried to express his sentimental sorrows at the boy's departure. The poor fellow felt that his dearest pleasure and closest friend was taken from him. He looked often and wistfully at the little vacant bed in his dressing room where the child used to sleep. He missed him sadly of mornings, and tried in vain to walk in the Park without him. He did not know how solitary he was until little Rawdon was gone. He liked the people who were fond of him, and would go and sit for long hours with his good-natured sister Lady Jane and talk to her about the virtues and good looks and hundred good qualities of the child.

Young Rawdon's aunt, we have said, was very fond of him, as was her little girl, who wept copiously when the time for her cousin's departure came. The elder Rawdon was thankful for the fondness of mother and daughter. The very best and honestest feelings of the man came out in these artless outpourings of paternal feeling in which he indulged in their presence, and encouraged by their sympathy. He secured not only Lady Jane's kindness, but her sincere regard, by the feelings which he manifested, and which he could not show to his own wife. The two kinswomen met as seldom as possible. Becky laughed bitterly at Jane's feelings and softness; the other's kindly and gentle nature could not but revolt at her sister's callous behavior.

It estranged Rawdon from his wife more than he knew or acknowledged to himself. She did not care for the estrangement. Indeed, she did not miss

him or anybody. She looked upon him as her errand man and humble slave. He might be ever so depressed or sulky and she did not mark his demeanor, or only treated it with a sneer. She was busy thinking about her position, or her pleasures, or her advancement in society. She ought to have held a great place in it, that is certain.

It was honest Briggs who made up the little kit for the boy which he was to take to school. Molly, the housemaid, blubbered in the passage when he went away—Molly kind and faithful in spite of a long arrear of unpaid wages. Mrs. Becky could not let her husband have the carriage to take the boy to school. Take the horses into the City!—Such a thing was never heard of. Let a cab be brought. She did not offer to kiss him when he went, nor did the child propose to embrace her, but gave a kiss to old Briggs (whom, in general, he was very shy of caressing), and consoled her by pointing out that he was to come home on Saturdays, when she would have the benefit of seeing him. As the cab rolled toward the City, Becky's carriage rattled off to the Park. She was chattering and laughing with a score of young dandies by the Serpentine as the father and son entered at the old gates of the school, where Rawdon left the child, and came away with a sadder, purer feeling in his heart than perhaps that poor battered fellow had ever known since he himself came out of the nursery.

He walked all the way home very dismally, and dined alone with Briggs. He was very kind to her, and grateful for her love and watchfulness over the boy. His conscience smote him that he had borrowed Briggs's money and aided in deceiving her. They talked about little Rawdon a long time, for Becky only came home to dress and go out to dinner. And then he went off uneasily to drink tea with Lady Jane and tell her of what had happened, and how little Rawdon went off like a trump, and how he was to wear a gown and little knee breeches, and how young Blackball, Jack Blackball's son, of the old regiment, had taken him in charge and promised to be kind to him.

In the course of a week young Blackball had constituted little Rawdon his fag, shoeblack, and breakfast toaster, initiated him into the mysteries of the Latin grammar, and thrashed him three or four times, but not severely. The little chap's good-natured honest face won his way for him. He only got that degree of beating which was, no doubt, good for him, and as for his blacking shoes, toasting bread, and fagging in general, were these offices not deemed to be necessary parts of every young English gentleman's education?

Our business does not lie with the second generation and Master Rawdon's life at school; otherwise the present tale might be carried to any indefinite length. The Colonel went to see his son a short time afterward, and found the lad sufficiently well and happy, grinning and laughing in his little black gown and little breeches.

His father sagaciously tipped Blackball, his master, a sovereign and secured that young gentleman's goodwill toward his fag. As a protégé of the great Lord Steyne, the nephew of a county Member, and a son of a Colonel and C.B. whose name appeared in some of the most fashionable parties in the *Morning Post*, perhaps the school authorities were disposed not to look un-

kindly on the child. He had plenty of pocket money, which he spent in treating his comrades royally to raspberry tarts, and he was often allowed to come home on Saturdays to his father, who always made a jubilee of that day. When free, Rawdon would take him to the play, or send him thither with the footman, and on Sundays he went to church with Briggs and Lady Jane and his cousins. Rawdon marveled over his stories about school, and fights, and fagging. Before long he knew the names of all the masters and the principal boys as well as little Rawdon himself. He invited little Rawdon's crony from school, and made both the children sick with pastry and oysters and porter after the play. He tried to look knowing over the Latin grammar when little Rawdon showed him what part of that work he was "in." "Stick to it, my boy," he said to him with much gravity. "There's nothing like a good classical education! Nothing!"

Becky's contempt for her husband grew greater every day. "Do what you like—dine where you please—go and have ginger beer and sawdust at Astley's or psalm singing with Lady Jane—only don't expect *me* to busy myself with the boy. I have your interests to attend to, as you can't attend to them yourself. I should like to know where you would have been now, and in what sort of a position in society, if I had not looked after you?" Indeed, nobody wanted poor old Rawdon at the parties whither Becky used to go. She was often asked without him now. She talked about great people as if she had the fee simple of Mayfair, and when the Court went into mourning she always wore black.

Little Rawdon being disposed of, Lord Steyne, who took such a parental interest in the affairs of this amiable poor family, thought that their expenses might be very advantageously curtailed by the departure of Miss Briggs, and that Becky was quite clever enough to take the management of her own house. It has been narrated in the former chapter how the benevolent nobleman had given his protégée money to pay off her little debt to Miss Briggs, who however still remained behind with her friends; whence my lord came to the painful conclusion that Mrs. Crawley had made some other use of the money confided to her than that for which her generous patron had given the loan. However, Lord Steyne was not so rude as to impart his suspicions upon this head to Mrs. Becky, whose feelings might be hurt by any controversy on the money question, and who might have a thousand painful reasons for disposing otherwise of his lordship's generous loan. But he determined to satisfy himself of the real state of the case, and instituted the necessary inquiries in a most cautious and delicate manner.

In the first place, he took an early opportunity of pumping Miss Briggs. That was not a difficult operation. A very little encouragement would set that worthy woman to talk volubly and pour out all within her. And one day when Mrs. Rawdon had gone out to drive, my lord dropped in upon the Curzon Street house, asked Briggs for a cup of coffee, told her that he had good accounts of the little boy at school, and in five minutes found out from her that Mrs. Rawdon had given her nothing except a black-silk gown, for which Miss Briggs was immensely grateful.

He laughed within himself at this artless story. For the truth is, our dear friend Rebecca had given him a most circumstantial narration of Briggs's delight at receiving her money—eleven hundred and twenty-five pounds—and in what securities she had invested it, and what a pang Becky herself felt in being obliged to pay away such a delightful sum of money. "Who knows," the dear woman may have thought within herself, "perhaps he may give me a little more?" My lord, however, made no such proposal to the little schemer—very likely thinking that he had been sufficiently generous already.

He had the curiosity, then, to ask Miss Briggs about the state of her private affairs, and she told his lordship candidly what her position was—how Miss Crawley had left her a legacy—how her relatives had had part of it—how Colonel Crawley had put out another portion, for which she had the best security and interest—and how Mr. and Mrs. Rawdon had kindly busied themselves with Sir Pitt, who was to dispose of the remainder most advantageously for her when he had time. My lord asked how much the Colonel had already invested for her, and Miss Briggs at once and truly told him that the sum was six hundred and odd pounds.

But as soon as she had told her story, the voluble Briggs repented of her frankness and besought my lord not to tell Mr. Crawley of the confessions which she had made. The Colonel was so kind—Mr. Crawley might be offended and pay back the money, for which she could get no such good interest anywhere else. Lord Steyne, laughing, promised he never would divulge their conversation, and when he and Miss Briggs parted he laughed still more.

"What an accomplished little devil it is!" thought he. "What a splendid actress and manager! She had almost got a second supply out of me the other day, with her coaxing ways. She beats all the women I have ever seen in the course of all my well-spent life. They are babies compared to her. I am a greenhorn myself, and a fool in her hands—an old fool. She is unsurpassable in lies." His lordship's admiration for Becky rose immeasurably at this proof of her cleverness. Getting the money was nothing, but getting double the sum she wanted, and paying nobody—it was a magnificent stroke. "And Crawley," my lord thought—"Crawley is not such a fool as he looks and seems. He has managed the matter cleverly enough on his side. Nobody would ever have supposed from his face and demeanor that he knew anything about this money business, and yet he put her up to it, and has spent the money, no doubt."

In this opinion my lord, we know, was mistaken, but it influenced a good deal his behavior toward Colonel Crawley, whom he began to treat with even less than that semblance of respect which he had formerly shown toward that gentleman. It never entered into the head of Mrs. Crawley's patron that the little lady might be making a purse for herself; and perhaps, if the truth must be told, he judged of Colonel Crawley by his experiences of other husbands whom he had known in the course of the long and well-spent life which had made him acquainted with a great deal of the weakness of mankind. My lord had bought so many men during his life that he was surely to be pardoned for supposing that he had found the price of this one.

He taxed Becky upon the point on the very first occasion when he met her

alone, and he complimented her, good-humoredly, on her cleverness in getting more than the money which she required. Becky was only a little taken aback. It was not the habit of this dear creature to tell falsehoods except when necessity compelled, but in these great emergencies it was her practice to lie very freely, and in an instant she was ready with another neat, plausible circumstantial story which she administered to her patron. The previous statement which she had made to him was a falsehood—a wicked falsehood. She owned it, but who had made her tell it?

"Ah, my lord," she said, "you don't know all I have to suffer and bear in silence. You see me gay and happy before you—you little know what I have to endure when there is no protector near me. It was my husband, by threats and the most savage treatment, forced me to ask for that sum about which I deceived you. It was he who, foreseeing that questions might be asked regarding the disposal of the money, forced me to account for it as I did. He took the money. He told me he had paid Miss Briggs. I did not want, I did not dare, to doubt him. Pardon the wrong which a desperate man is forced to commit, and pity a miserable, miserable woman." She burst into tears as she spoke. Persecuted virtue never looked more bewitchingly wretched.

They had a long conversation driving round and round the Regent's Park in Mrs. Crawley's carriage together, a conversation of which it is not necessary to repeat the details; but the upshot of it was that when Becky came home, she flew to her dear Briggs with a smiling face and announced that she had some very good news for her. Lord Steyne had acted in the noblest and most generous manner. He was always thinking how and when he could do good. Now that little Rawdon was gone to school, a dear companion and friend was no longer necessary to her. She was grieved beyond measure to part with Briggs, but her means required that she should practice every retrenchment, and her sorrow was mitigated by the idea that her dear Briggs would be far better provided for by her generous patron than in her humble home. Mrs. Pilkington, the housekeeper of Gauntly Hall, was growing exceedingly old, feeble, and rheumatic; she was not equal to the work of superintending that vast mansion, and must be on the lookout for a successor. It was a splendid position. The family did not go to Gauntly once in two years. At other times the housekeeper was the mistress of the magnificent mansion—had four covers daily for her table, was visited by the clergy and the most respectable people of the county, was the lady of Gauntly, in fact. And the two last housekeepers before Mrs. Pilkington had married Rectors of Gauntly, but Mrs. P could not, being the aunt of the present Rector. The place was not to be hers yet, but she might go down on a visit to Mrs. Pilkington and see whether she would like to succeed her.

What words can paint the ecstatic gratitude of Briggs? All she stipulated for was that little Rawdon should be allowed to come down and see her at the Hall. Becky promised this—anything. She ran up to her husband when he came home and told him the joyful news. Rawdon was glad, deuced glad. The weight was off his conscience about poor Briggs's money. She was pro-

vided for, at any rate, but—but his mind was disquiet. He did not seem to be all right somehow. He told little Southdown what Lord Steyne had done and the young man eyed Crawley with an air which surprised the latter.

He told Lady Jane of this second proof of Steyne's bounty and she too looked odd and alarmed. So did Sir Pitt. "She is too clever and—and gay to be allowed to go from party to party without a companion," both said. "You must go with her, Rawdon, wherever she goes, and you *must* have somebody with her—one of the girls from Queen's Crawley, perhaps, though they were rather giddy guardians for her."

Somebody Becky should have. But in the meantime it was clear that honest Briggs must not lose her chance of settlement for life, and so she and her bags were packed and she set off on her journey. And so two of Rawdon's outsentinels were in the hands of the enemy.

Sir Pitt went and expostulated with his sister-in-law upon the subject of the dismissal of Briggs and other matters of delicate family interest. In vain she pointed out to him how necessary was the protection of Lord Steyne for her poor husband, how cruel it would be on their part of deprive Briggs of the position offered to her. Cajolements, coaxings, smiles, tears could not satisfy Sir Pitt, and he had something very like a quarrel with his once-admired Becky. He spoke of the honor of the family, the unsullied reputation of the Crawleys, expressed himself in indignant tones about her receiving those young Frenchmen—those wild young men of fashion—my Lord Steyne himself, whose carriage was always at her door, who passed hours daily in her company, and whose constant presence made the world talk about her. As the head of the house he implored her to be more prudent. Society was already speaking lightly of her. Lord Steyne, though a nobleman of the greatest station and talents, was a man whose attentions would compromise any woman. He besought, he implored, he commanded his sister-in-law to be watchful in her intercourse with that nobleman.

Becky promised anything and everything Pitt wanted, but Lord Steyne came to her house as often as ever, and Sir Pitt's anger increased. I wonder was Lady Jane angry or pleased that her husband at last found fault with his favorite Rebecca? Lord Steyne's visits continuing, his own ceased, and his wife was for refusing all further intercourse with that nobleman and declining the invitation for the charade night which the Marchioness sent to her; but Sir Pitt thought it was necessary to accept it, as his Royal Highness would be there.

Although he went to the party in question, Sir Pitt quitted it very early, and his wife too was very glad to come away. Becky hardly so much as spoke to them or noticed her sister-in-law. Pitt Crawley declared her behavior was monstrously indecorous, reprobated in strong terms the habit of play-acting and fancy dressing, as highly unbecoming in a British female; and after the charades were over, took his brother Rawdon to task for appearing himself and allowing his wife to join in such improper exhibitions.

Rawdon said she should not join in any more such amusements; but indeed,

and perhaps from hints from his elder brother and sister, he had already become a very watchful and exemplary domestic character. He left off his clubs and billiards. He never left home. He took Becky out to drive, he went laboriously with her to all her parties. Whenever my Lord Steyne called, he was sure to find the Colonel. And when Becky proposed to go out without her husband, or received invitations for herself, he peremptorily ordered her to refuse them, and there was that in the gentleman's manner which enforced obedience. Little Becky, to do her justice, was charmed with Rawdon's gallantry. If he was surly, she never was. Whether friends were present or absent, she had always a kind smile for him, and was attentive to his pleasure and comfort. It was the early days of their marriage over again; the same good humor, *prévenances*, merriment, and artless confidence and regard. "How much pleasanter it is," she would say, "to have you by my side in the carriage than that foolish old Briggs! Let us always go on so, dear Rawdon. How nice it would be, and how happy we should always be if we had but the money!" He fell asleep after dinner in his chair. He did not see the face opposite to him, haggard, weary, and terrible. It lighted up with fresh candid smiles when he woke. It kissed him gaily. He wondered that he had ever had suspicions. No, he never had suspicions, all those dumb doubts and surly misgivings which had been gathering on his mind were mere idle jealousies. She was fond of him, she always had been. As for her shining in society, it was no fault of hers, she was formed to shine there. Was there any woman who could talk, or sing, or do anything like her? If she would but like the boy! Rawdon thought. But the mother and son never could be brought together.

And it was while Rawdon's mind was agitated with these doubts and perplexities that the incident occurred which was mentioned in the last chapter, and the unfortunate Colonel found himself a prisoner away from home.

CHAPTER LII

Friend rawdon drove on then to Mr. Moss's mansion in Cursitor Street, and was duly inducted into that dismal place of hospitality. Morning was breaking over the cheerful housetops of Chancery Lane as the rattling cab woke up the echoes there. A little pink-eyed Jew boy with a head as ruddy as the rising morn let the party into the house, and Rawdon was welcomed to the ground-floor apartments by Mr. Moss, his traveling companion and host, who cheerfully asked him if he would like a glass of something warm after his drive.

The Colonel was not so depressed as some mortals would be who, quitting a palace and a *placens uxor*, find themselves barred into a sponging house; for if the truth must be told, he had been a lodger at Mr. Moss's establishment once or twice before. We have not thought it necessary in the previous course of this narrative to mention these trivial little domestic incidents, but the reader may be assured that they can't unfrequently occur in the life of a man who lives on nothing a year.

Upon his first visit to Mr. Moss, the Colonel, then a bachelor, had been liberated by the generosity of his aunt. On the second mishap, little Becky, with the greatest spirit and kindness, had borrowed a sum of money from Lord Southdown and had coaxed her husband's creditor (who was her shawl, velvet-gown, lace-pocket-handkerchief, trinket, and gimcrack purveyor, indeed) to take a portion of the sum claimed and Rawdon's promissory note for the remainder. So on both these occasions the capture and release had been conducted with the utmost gallantry on all sides, and Moss and the Colonel were therefore on the very best of terms.

"You'll find your old bed, Colonel, and everything comfortable," that gentleman said, "as I may honestly say. You may be pretty sure it's kep' aired, and by the best of company too."

"I'll ring when I want anything," said Rawdon, and went quietly to his bedroom. He was an old soldier, we have said, and not to be disturbed by any little shocks of fate. A weaker man would have sent off a letter to his wife on the instant of his capture. "But what is the use of disturbing her night's rest?" thought Rawdon. "She won't know whether I am in my room or not. It will be time enough to write to her when she has had her sleep out and I have had mine. It's only a hundred and seventy, and the deuce is in it if we can't raise that." And so, thinking about little Rawdon (whom he would not like to know that he was in such a queer place), the Colonel fell asleep. It was ten o'clock when he woke up, and the ruddy-headed youth brought him, with conscious pride, a fine silver dressing case, wherewith he might perform the operation of shaving.

Indeed Mr. Moss's house, though somewhat dirty, was splendid throughout. There were dirty trays and wine coolers *en permanence* on the sideboard, huge dirty gilt cornices with dingy yellow satin hangings to the barred windows which looked into Cursitor Street, vast and dirty gilt picture frames surrounding pieces sporting and sacred, all of which works were by the greatest masters—and fetched the greatest prices too in the bill transactions, in the course of which they were sold and bought over and over again. The Colonel's breakfast was served to him in the same dingy and gorgeous plated ware. Miss Moss, a dark-eyed maid in curl papers, appeared with the teapot and, smiling, asked the Colonel how he had slept. And she brought him in the *Morning Post*, with the names of all the great people who had figured at Lord Steyne's entertainment the night before. It contained a brilliant account of the festivities, and of the beautiful and accomplished Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's admirable personifications.

After a lively chat with this lady, Colonel Crawley called for pens and ink and paper, and being asked how many sheets, chose one which was brought to him between Miss Moss's own finger and thumb. Many a sheet had that dark-eyed damsel brought in, many a poor fellow had scrawled and blotted hurried lines of entreaty and paced up and down that awful room until his messenger brought back the reply. Poor men always use messengers instead of the post.

Now on the score of his application, Rawdon had not many misgivings.

Dear Becky, *I hope you slept well.* Don't be *frightened* if I don't bring you in your *coffy*. Last night as I was coming home smoaking, I met with an *accadent*. I was *nabbed* by Moss of Cursitor Street—from whose *gilt and splendid parler* I write this—the same that had me this time two years. Miss Moss brought in my tea—she is grown very *fat*, and, as usual, had *her stockens down at heal.*

It's Nathan's business—a hundred-and-fifty—with costs, hundred-and-seventy. Please send me my desk and some *cloths*—I'm in pumps and a white tye (something like Miss M's stockings)—I've seventy in it. And as soon as you get this Drive to Nathan's—offer him seventy-five down, and ask *him to renew*—say I'll take wine—we may as well have some dinner sherry; but not *picturs*, they're too dear.

If he won't stand it. Take my ticker and such of your things as you can *spare*, and send them to Balls—we must, of coarse, have the sum tonight. It won't do to let it stand over, as tomorrow's Sunday; the beds here are not very *clean*, and there may be other things out against me—I'm glad it ain't Rawdon's Saturday for coming home. God bless you.

Yours in haste, R. C.

P. S. Make haste and come.

This letter, sealed with a wafer, was dispatched by one of the messengers who are always hanging about Mr. Moss's establishment, and Rawdon, having seen him depart, went out in the courtyard and smoked his cigar with a tolerably easy mind—in spite of the bars overhead; for Mr. Moss's courtyard is railed in like a cage, lest the gentlemen who are boarding with him should take a fancy to escape from his hospitality.

Three hours, he calculated, would be the utmost time required before Becky should arrive and open his prison doors, and he passed these pretty cheerfully in smoking, in reading the paper, and in the coffeeroom with an acquaintance who happened to be there, and with whom he cut for sixpences for some hours, with pretty equal luck on either side.

But the day passed away and no messenger returned—no Becky. Mr. Moss's tably-dy-hoty was served at the appointed hour of half-past five, when such of the gentlemen lodging in the house as could afford to pay for the banquet came and partook of it in the splendid front parlor before described, and with which Mr. Crawley's temporary lodging communicated. The Colonel ate with a very faint appetite. Asked whether he would "stand" a bottle of champagne for the company, he consented, and the ladies drank to his 'ealth, and Mr. Moss, in the most polite manner, "looked toward him."

In the midst of this repast, however, the doorbell was heard—young Moss of the ruddy hair rose up with the keys and answered the summons, and coming back, told the Colonel that the messenger had returned with a bag, a desk, and a letter, which he gave him. "No ceramony, Colonel, I beg," said Mrs. Moss with a wave of her hand, and he opened the letter rather tremulously. It was a beautiful letter, highly scented, on a pink paper and with a light-green seal.

Mon pauvre cher petit, I could not sleep *one wink* for thinking of what had become of *my odious old monstre*, and only got to rest in the morning after sending for Mr. Blench (for I was in a fever), who gave me a composing draught and left orders with Finette that I should be disturbed *on no account*. So that my poor old man's messenger who had *bien mauvaise mine* Finette says, and *sentoit le genièvre*, remained in the hall for some hours waiting my bell. You may fancy my state when I read your poor dear old ill-spelt letter.

Ill as I was, I instantly called for the carriage, and as soon as I was dressed (though I couldn't drink a drop of chocolate—I assure you I couldn't without my *monstre* to bring it to me), I drove *ventre à terre* to Nathan's. I saw him—I wept—I cried—I fell at his odious knees. Nothing would mollify the horrid man. He would have all the money, he said, or keep my poor *monstre* in prison. I drove home with the intention of paying that *triste visite chez mon oncle* (when every trinket I have should be at your disposal, though they would not fetch a hundred pounds, for some, you know, are with *ce cher oncle* already), and found milor there with the Bulgarian old sheep-faced monster, who had come to compliment me upon last night's performances. Paddington came in, too, drawling and lisping and twiddling his hair; so did Champignac, and his *chef*—everybody with *foison* of compliments and pretty speeches—plaguing poor me, who longed to be rid of them, and was thinking *every moment of the time* of *mon pauvre prisonnier*.

When they were gone, I went down on my knees to milor, told him we were going to pawn everything, and begged and prayed him to give me two hundred pounds. He pish'd and psha'd in a fury—told me not to be such a fool as to pawn—and said he would see whether he could lend me the money. At last he went away, promising that he would send it me in the morning, when I will bring it to my poor old *monstre* with a kiss from his affectionate

BECKY

I am writing in bed. Oh, I have such a headache and such a heartache!

When Rawdon read over this letter, he turned so red and looked so savage that the company at the table d'hôte easily perceived that bad news had reached him. All his suspicions, which he had been trying to banish, returned upon him. She could not even go out and sell her trinkets to free him. She could laugh and talk about compliments paid to her while he was in prison. Who had put him there? Wenham had walked with him. Was there—— He could hardly bear to think of what he suspected. Leaving the room hurriedly, he ran into his own, opened his desk, wrote two hurried lines, which he directed to Sir Pitt or Lady Crawley, and bade the messenger carry them at once to Gaunt Street, bidding him to take a cab and promising him a guinea if he was back in an hour.

In the note he besought his dear brother and sister, for the sake of God, for the sake of his dear child and his honor, to come to him and relieve him

from his difficulty. He was in prison, he wanted a hundred pounds to set him free—he entreated them to come to him.

He went back to the dining-room after dispatching his messenger, and called for more wine. He laughed and talked with a strange boisterousness, as the people thought. Sometimes he laughed madly at his own fears, and went on drinking for an hour, listening all the while for the carriage which was to bring his fate back.

At the expiration of that time, wheels were heard whirling up to the gate—the young janitor went out with his gate keys. It was a lady whom he let in at the bailiff's door.

"Colonel Crawley," she said, trembling very much. He, with a knowing look, locked the outer door upon her—then unlocked and opened the inner one, and calling out, "Colonel, you're wanted," led her into the back parlor, which he occupied.

Rawdon came in from the dining-parlor where all those people were carousing into his back room, a flare of coarse light following him into the apartment where the lady stood, still very nervous.

"It is I, Rawdon," she said, in a timid voice which she strove to render cheerful. "It is Jane." Rawdon was quite overcome by that kind voice and presence. He ran up to her—caught her in his arms—gasped out some inarticulate words of thanks, and fairly sobbed on her shoulder. She did not know the cause of his emotion.

The bills of Mr. Moss were quickly settled, perhaps to the disappointment of that gentleman, who had counted on having the Colonel as his guest over Sunday at least, and Jane, with beaming smiles and happiness in her eyes, carried away Rawdon from the bailiff's house and they went homeward in the cab in which she had hastened to his release. Pitt was gone to a parliamentary dinner, she said, when Rawdon's note came, "and so, dear Rawdon, I—I came myself," and she put her kind hand in his. Perhaps it was well for Rawdon Crawley that Pitt was away at that dinner. Rawdon thanked his sister a hundred times, and with an ardor of gratitude which touched and almost alarmed that softhearted woman.

"Oh," said he in his rude, artless way, "you—you don't know how I'm changed since I've known you, and—and little Rawdy. I—I'd like to change somehow. You see I want—I want—to be——" He did not finish the sentence, but she could interpret it. And that night after he left her and as she sat by her own little boy's bed she prayed humbly for that poor wayworn sinner.

Rawdon left her and walked home rapidly. It was nine o'clock at night. He ran across the streets and the great squares of Vanity Fair, and at length came up breathless opposite his own house. He started back and fell against the railings, trembling as he looked up. The drawing-room windows were blazing with light. She had said that she was in bed and ill. He stood there for some time, the light from the rooms on his pale face.

He took out his door key and let himself into the house. He could hear laughter in the upper rooms. He was in the ball dress in which he had been captured the night before. He went silently up the stairs, leaning against the

banisters at the stairhead. Nobody was stirring in the house besides—all the servants had been sent away. Rawdon heard laughter within—laughter and singing. Becky was singing a snatch of the song of the night before. A hoarse voice shouted "Brava! Brava!"—It was Lord Steyne's.

Rawdon opened the door and went in. A little table with a dinner was laid out—and wine and plate. Steyne was hanging over the sofa on which Becky sat. The wretched woman was in a brilliant full toilet, her arms and all her fingers sparkling with bracelets and rings, and the brilliants on her breast which Steyne had given her. He had her hand in his, and was bowing over it to kiss it when Becky started up with a faint scream as she caught sight of Rawdon's white face. At the next instant she tried a smile, a horrid smile, as if to welcome her husband, and Steyne rose up, grinding his teeth, pale, and with fury in his looks.

He too attempted a laugh—and came forward holding out his hand. "What, come back! How d'ye do, Crawley?" he said, the nerves of his mouth twitching as he tried to grin at the intruder.

There was that in Rawdon's face which caused Becky to fling herself before him. "I am innocent, Rawdon," she said. "Before God, I am innocent!" She clung hold of his coat, of his hands; her own were all covered with serpents, and rings, and baubles. "I am innocent.—Say I am innocent," she said to Lord Steyne.

He thought a trap had been laid for him, and was as furious with the wife as with the husband. "You innocent! Damn you," he screamed out. "You innocent! Why, every trinket you have on your body is paid for by me. I have given you thousands of pounds which this fellow has spent, and for which he has sold you. Innocent, by—! You're as innocent as your mother the ballet girl, and your husband the bully. Don't think to frighten me as you have done others. Make way, sir, and let me pass." And Lord Steyne seized up his hat and with flame in his eyes and looking his enemy fiercely in the face, marched upon him, never for a moment doubting that the other would give way.

But Rawdon Crawley, springing out, seized him by the neckcloth until Steyne, almost strangled, writhed and bent under his arm. "You lie, you dog!" said Rawdon. "You lie, you coward and villain!" And he struck the peer twice over the face with his open hand, and flung him bleeding to the ground. It was all done before Rebecca could interpose. She stood there trembling before him. She admired her husband, strong, brave, and victorious.

"Come here," he said. She came up at once.

"Take off those things." She began, trembling, pulling the jewels from her arms and the rings from her shaking fingers, and held them all in a heap, quivering and looking up at him. "Throw them down," he said, and she dropped them. He tore the diamond ornament out of her breast and flung it at Lord Steyne. It cut him on his bald forehead. Steyne wore the scar to his dying day.

"Come upstairs," Rawdon said to his wife. "Don't kill me, Rawdon," she

said. He laughed savagely. "I want to see if that man lies about the money as he has about me. Has he given you any?"

"No," said Rebecca, "that is—"

"Give me your keys," Rawdon answered, and they went out together.

Rebecca gave him all the keys but one, and she was in hopes that he would not have remarked the absence of that. It belonged to the little desk which Amelia had given her in early days, and which she kept in a secret place. But Rawdon flung open boxes and wardrobes, throwing the multifarious trumpery of their contents here and there, and at last he found the desk. The woman was forced to open it. It contained papers, love letters many years old—all sorts of small trinkets and woman's memoranda. And it contained a pocket-book with banknotes. Some of these were dated ten years back, too, and one was quite a fresh one—a note for a thousand pounds which Lord Steyne had given her. "Did he give you this?" Rawdon said.

"Yes," Rebecca answered.

"I'll send it to him today," Rawdon said (for day had dawned again, and many hours had passed in this search), "and I will pay Briggs, who was kind to the boy, and some of the debts. You will let me know where I shall send the rest to you. You might have spared me a hundred pounds, Becky, out of all this—I have always shared with you."

"I am innocent," said Becky. And he left her without another word.

What were her thoughts when he left her? She remained for hours after he was gone, the sunshine pouring into the room and Rebecca sitting alone on the bed's edge. The drawers were all opened and their contents scattered about—dresses and feathers, scarfs and trinkets, a heap of tumbled vanities lying in a wreck. Her hair was falling over her shoulders, her gown was torn where Rawdon had wrenched the brilliants out of it. She heard him go downstairs a few minutes after he left her, and the door slamming and closing on him. She knew he would never come back. He was gone forever. Would he kill himself? She thought—not until after he had met Lord Steyne. She thought of her long past life, and all the dismal incidents of it. Ah, how dreary it seemed, how miserable, lonely, and profitless! Should she take laudanum and end it too—have done with all hopes, schemes, debts, and triumphs? The French maid found her in this position, sitting in the midst of her miserable ruins with clasped hands and dry eyes. The woman was her accomplice and in Steyne's pay. "*Mon Dieu*, madame, what has happened?" she asked.

What *had* happened? Was she guilty or not? She said not, but who could tell what was truth which came from those lips, or if that corrupt heart was in this case pure? All her lies and her schemes, all her selfishness and her wiles, all her wit and genius, had come to this bankruptcy. The woman closed the curtains, and with some entreaty and show of kindness persuaded her mistress to lie down on the bed. Then she went below and gathered up the trinkets which had been lying on the floor since Rebecca dropped them there at her husband's orders and Lord Steyne went away.

CHAPTER LIII

The mansion of Sir Pitt Crawley in Great Gaunt Street was just beginning to dress itself for the day as Rawdon, in his evening costume, which he had now worn two days, passed by the scared female who was scouring the steps and entered into his brother's study. Lady Jane in her morning gown was up and abovestairs in the nursery, superintending the toilets of her children and listening to the morning prayers which the little creatures performed at her knee. Every morning she and they performed this duty privately, and before the public ceremonial at which Sir Pitt presided, and at which all the people of the household were expected to assemble. Rawdon sat down in the study before the Baronet's table, set out with the orderly blue books and the letters, the neatly docketed bills and symmetrical pamphlets, the locked account books, desks, and dispatch boxes, the Bible, the *Quarterly Review*, and the *Court Guide*, which all stood as if on parade awaiting inspection of their chief.

A book of family sermons, one of which Sir Pitt was in the habit of administering to his family on Sunday mornings, lay ready on the study table and awaiting his judicious selection. And by the sermon book was the *Observer* newspaper, damp and neatly folded, and for Sir Pitt's own private use. His gentleman alone took the opportunity of perusing the newspaper before he laid it by his master's desk. Before he had brought it into the study that morning he had read in the journal a flaming account of "Festivities at Gaunt House," with the names of all the distinguished personages invited by the Marquis of Steyne to meet His Royal Highness. Having made comments upon this entertainment to the housekeeper and her niece as they were taking early tea and hot buttered toast in the former lady's apartment and wondered how the Rawdon Crawleys could git on, the valet had damped and folded the paper once more, so that it looked quite fresh and innocent against the arrival of the master of the house.

Poor Rawdon took up the paper and began to try and read it until his brother should arrive. But the print fell blank upon his eyes, and he did not know in the least what he was reading. The government news and appointments (which Sir Pitt as a public man was bound to peruse, otherwise he would by no means permit the introduction of Sunday papers into his household), the theatrical criticisms, the fight for a hundred pounds a side between the Barking Butcher and the Tutbury Pet, the Gaunt House chronicle itself, which contained a most complimentary though guarded account of the famous charades of which Mrs. Becky had been the heroine—all these passed as in a haze before Rawdon as he sat waiting the arrival of the chief of the family.

Punctually as the shrill-toned bell of the black-marble study clock began to chime nine, Sir Pitt made his appearance, fresh, neat, smugly shaved, with a waxy clean face and stiff shirt collar, his scanty hair combed and oiled, trimming his nails as he descended the stairs majestically in a starched cravat

and a gray flannel dressing gown—a real old English gentleman, in a word—a model of neatness and every propriety. He started when he saw poor Rawdon in his study in tumbled clothes, with bloodshot eyes, and his hair over his face. He thought his brother was not sober, and had been out all night on some orgy. "Good gracious, Rawdon," he said, with a blank face, "what brings you here at this time of the morning! Why ain't you at home?"

"Home," said Rawdon, with a wild laugh. "Don't be frightened, Pitt. I'm not drunk. Shut the door, I want to speak to you."

Pitt closed the door and came up to the table, where he sat down in the other armchair—that one placed for the reception of the steward, agent, or confidential visitor who came to transact business with the Baronet—and trimmed his nails more vehemently than ever.

"Pitt, it's all over with me," the Colonel said, after a pause. "I'm done."

"I always said it would come to this," the Baronet cried peevishly, and beating a tune with his clean-trimmed nails. "I warned you a thousand times. I can't help you any more. Every shilling of my money is tied up. Even the hundred pounds that Jane took you last night was promised to my lawyer tomorrow morning, and the want of it will put me to great inconvenience. I don't mean to say that I won't assist you ultimately. But as for paying your creditors in full, I might as well hope to pay the national debt. It is madness, sheer madness to think of such a thing. You must come to a compromise. It's a painful thing for the family, but everybody does it. There was George Kitely, Lord Ragland's son, went through the court last week, and was what they call whitewashed, I believe. Lord Ragland would not pay a shilling for him, and—"

"It's not money I want," Rawdon broke in. "I'm not come to you about myself. Never mind what happens to me—"

"What is the matter, then?" said Pitt, somewhat relieved.

"It's the boy," said Rawdon, in a husky voice. "I want you to promise me that you will take charge of him when I'm gone. That dear good wife of yours has always been good to him, and he's fonder of her than he is of his—Damn it. Look here, Pitt—you know that I was to have had Miss Crawley's money. I wasn't brought up like a younger brother, but was always encouraged to be extravagant and kept idle. But for this I might have been quite a different man. I didn't do my duty with the regiment so bad. You know how I was thrown over about the money, and who got it."

"After the sacrifices I have made, and the manner in which I have stood by you, I think this sort of reproach is useless," Sir Pitt said. "Your marriage was your own doing, not mine."

"That's over now," said Rawdon. "That's over now." And the words were wrenched from him with a groan which made his brother start.

"Good God! Is she dead?" Sir Pitt said, with a voice of genuine alarm and commiseration.

"I wish *I* was," Rawdon replied. "If it wasn't for little Rawdon I'd have cut my throat this morning—and that damned villain's too."

Sir Pitt instantly guessed the truth, and surmised that Lord Steyne was the

person whose life Rawdon wished to take. The Colonel told his senior briefly, and in broken accents, the circumstances of the case. "It was a regular plan between that scoundrel and her," he said. "The bailiffs were put upon me. I was taken as I was going out of his house. When I wrote to her for money, she said she was ill in bed, and put me off to another day. And when I got home, I found her in diamonds and sitting with that villain alone." He then went on to describe hurriedly the personal conflict with Lord Steyne. To an affair of that nature, of course, he said, there was but one issue, and after his conference with his brother, he was going away to make the necessary arrangements for the meeting which must ensue. "And as it may end fatally with me," Rawdon said with a broken voice, "and as the boy has no mother, I must leave him to you and Jane, Pitt—only it will be a comfort to me if you will promise me to be his friend."

The elder brother was much affected, and shook Rawdon's hand with a cordiality seldom exhibited by him. Rawdon passed his hand over his shaggy eyebrows. "Thank you, Brother," said he. "I know I can trust your word."

"I will, upon my honor," the Baronet said. And thus, and almost mutely, this bargain was struck between them.

Then Rawdon took out of his pocket the little pocketbook which he had discovered in Becky's desk, and from which he drew a bundle of the notes which it contained. "Here's six hundred," he said. "You didn't know I was so rich. I want you to give the money to Briggs, who lent it to us—and who was kind to the boy—and I've always felt ashamed of having taken the poor old woman's money. And here's some more—I have only kept back a few pounds, which Becky may as well have to get on with." As he spoke he took hold of the other notes to give to his brother, but his hands shook, and he was so agitated that the pocketbook fell from him, and out of it the thousand-pound note which had been the last of the unlucky Becky's winnings.

Pitt stooped and picked them up, amazed at so much wealth. "Not that," Rawdon said. "I hope to put a bullet into the man whom that belongs to." He had thought to himself it would be a fine revenge to wrap a ball in the note and kill Steyne with it.

After this colloquy the brothers once more shook hands and parted. Lady Jane had heard of the Colonel's arrival and was waiting for her husband in the adjoining dining-room with female instinct, auguring evil. The door of the dining-room happened to be left open, and the lady of course was issuing from it as the two brothers passed out of the study. She held out her hand to Rawdon and said she was glad he was come to breakfast, though she could perceive by his haggard, unshorn face and the dark looks of her husband that there was very little question of breakfast between them. Rawdon muttered some excuses about an engagement, squeezing hard the timid little hand which his sister-in-law reached out to him. Her imploring eyes could read nothing but calamity in his face, but he went away without another word. Nor did Sir Pitt vouchsafe her any explanation. The children came up to salute him and he kissed them in his usual frigid manner. The mother took both of them close to herself and held a hand of each of them as

they knelt down to prayers, which Sir Pitt read to them, and to the servants in their Sunday suits or liveries ranged upon chairs on the other side of the hissing tea urn. Breakfast was so late that day in consequence of the delays which had occurred that the church bells began to ring while they were sitting over their meal, and Lady Jane was too ill, she said, to go to church, though her thoughts had been entirely astray during the period of family devotion.

Rawdon Crawley meanwhile hurried on from Great Gaunt Street and knocking at the great bronze Medusa's head which stands on the portal of Gaunt House, brought out the purple Silenus in a red-and-silver waistcoat who acts as porter of that palace. The man was scared also by the Colonel's disheveled appearance, and barred the way as if afraid that the other was going to force it. But Colonel Crawley only took out a card and enjoined him particularly to send it to Lord Steyne, and to mark the address written on it, and say that Colonel Crawley would be all day after one o'clock at the Regent Club in St. James's Street—not at home. The fat, red-faced man looked after him with astonishment as he strode away. So did the people in their Sunday clothes who were out so early, the charity boys with shining faces, the greengrocer lolling at his door, and the publican shutting his shutters in the sunshine, against service commenced. The people joked at the cabstand about his appearance as he took a carriage there and told the driver to take him to Knightsbridge Barracks.

All the bells were jangling and tolling as he reached that place. He might have seen his old acquaintance Amelia on her way from Brompton to Russell Square, had he been looking out. Troops of schools were on their march to church, the shiny pavement and outsides of coaches in the suburbs were thronged with people out upon their Sunday pleasure. But the Colonel was much too busy to take any heed of these phenomena, and arriving at Knightsbridge, speedily made his way up to the room of his old friend and comrade, Captain Macmurdo, who, Crawley found to his satisfaction, was in barracks.

Captain Macmurdo, a veteran officer and Waterloo man greatly liked by his regiment, in which want of money alone prevented him from attaining the highest ranks, was enjoying the forenoon calmly in bed. He had been at a fast supper party the night before and was resting himself after the night's labors and not being on duty, was in bed.

When Rawdon told the Captain he wanted a friend, the latter knew perfectly well on what duty of friendship he was called to act, and indeed had conducted scores of affairs for his acquaintances with the greatest prudence and skill. His Royal Highness the late lamented Commander in Chief had had the greatest regard for Macmurdo on this account, and he was the common refuge of gentlemen in trouble.

"What's the row about, Crawley, my boy?" said the old warrior. "No more gambling business, hay, like that when we shot Captain Marker?"

"It's about—about my wife," Crawley answered, casting down his eyes and turning very red.

The other gave a whistle. "I always said she'd throw you over," he began—

indeed there were bets in the regiment and at the clubs regarding the probable fate of Colonel Crawley, so lightly was his wife's character esteemed by his comrades and the world. But seeing the savage look with which Rawdon answered the expression of this opinion, Macmurdo did not think fit to enlarge upon it further.

"Is there no way out of it, old boy?" the Captain continued in a grave tone. "Is it only suspicion, you know, or—or what is it? Any letters? Can't you keep it quiet? Best not make any noise about a thing of that sort if you can help it." "Think of his only finding her out now," the Captain thought to himself, and remembered a hundred particular conversations at the mess table in which Mrs. Crawley's reputation had been torn to shreds.

"There's no way but one out of it," Rawdon replied, "and there's only a way out of it for one of us, Mac—do you understand? I was put out of the way, arrested. I found 'em alone together. I told him he was a liar and a coward, and knocked him down and thrashed him."

"Served him right," Macmurdo said. "Who is it?"

Rawdon answered it was Lord Steyne.

"The deuce! A marquis! They say he—that is, they said you——"

"What the devil do you mean?" roared out Rawdon. "Do you mean that you ever heard a fellow doubt about my wife and didn't tell me, Mac?"

"The world's very censorious, old boy," the other replied. "What the deuce was the good of my telling you what any tomfools talked about?"

"It was damned unfriendly, Mac," said Rawdon, quite overcome, and covering his face with his hands, he gave way to an emotion the sight of which caused the tough old campaigner opposite him to wince with sympathy. "Hold up, old boy," he said. "Great man or not, we'll put a bullet in him, damn him. As for women, they're all so."

"You don't know how fond I was of that one," Rawdon said half-inarticulately. "Damme, I followed her like a footman. I gave up everything I had to her. I'm a beggar because I would marry her. By Jove, sir, I've pawned my own watch in order to get her anything she fancied, and she—she's been making a purse for herself all the time, and grudged me a hundred pound to get out of quod." He then fiercely and incoherently, and with an agitation under which his counselor had never before seen him labor, told Macmurdo the circumstances of the story. His adviser caught at some stray hints in it.

"She may be innocent after all," he said. "She says so. Steyne has been a hundred times alone with her in the house before."

"It may be so," Rawdon answered sadly, "but this don't look very innocent." And he showed the Captain the thousand-pound note which he had found in Becky's pocketbook. "This is what he gave her, Mac, and she kept it unknown to me, and with this money in the house she refused to stand by me when I was locked up." The Captain could not but own that the secreting of the money had a very ugly look.

While they were engaged in their conference Rawdon dispatched Captain Macmurdo's servant to Curzon Street with an order to the domestic there to give up a bag of clothes of which the Colonel had great need. And during

the man's absence, and with great labor and a Johnson's *Dictionary*, which stood them in much stead, Rawdon and his second composed a letter which the latter was to send to Lord Steyne. Captain Macmurdo had the honor of waiting upon the Marquis of Steyne on the part of Colonel Rawdon Crawley, and begged to intimate that he was empowered by the Colonel to make any arrangements for the meeting which he had no doubt it was his lordship's intention to demand, and which the circumstances of the morning had rendered inevitable. Captain Macmurdo begged Lord Steyne, in the most polite manner, to appoint a friend with whom he (Captain M.) might communicate, and desired that the meeting might take place with as little delay as possible.

In a postscript the Captain stated that he had in his possession a banknote for a large amount which Colonel Crawley had reason to suppose was the property of the Marquis of Steyne. And he was anxious, on the Colonel's behalf, to give up the note to its owner.

By the time this note was composed, the Captain's servant returned from his mission to Colonel Crawley's house in Curzon Street, but without the carpetbag and portmanteau for which he had been sent, and with a very puzzled and odd face.

"They won't give 'em up," said the man. "There's a regular shinty in the house, and everything at sixes and sevens. The landlord's come in and took possession. The servants was adrinkin' up in the drawing-room. They said—they said you had gone off with the plate, Colonel," the man added after a pause.—"One of the servants is off already. And Simpson, the man as was very noisy, and drunk indeed, says nothing shall go out of the house till his wages is paid up."

The account of this little revolution in Mayfair astonished and gave a little gaiety to an otherwise very *triste* conversation. The two officers laughed at Rawdon's discomfiture.

"I'm glad the little 'un isn't at home," Rawdon said, biting his nails. "You remember him, Mac, don't you, in the riding school? How he sat the kicker, to be sure! Didn't he?"

"That he did, old boy," said the good-natured Captain.

"He's a regular trump, that boy," the father went on, still musing about his son. "I say, Mac, if anything goes wrong—if I drop—I should like you to—to go and see him, you know, and say that I was very fond of him, and that. And—dash it—old chap, give him these gold sleeve buttons. It's all I've got." He covered his face with his black hands, over which the tears rolled and made furrows of white. Mr. Macmurdo had also occasion to take off his silk nightcap and rub it across his eyes.

"Go down and order some breakfast," he said to his man in a loud cheerful voice. "What'll you have, Crawley? Some deviled kidneys and a herring, let's say.—And, Clay, lay out some dressing things for the Colonel. We were always pretty much of a size, Rawdon, my boy, and neither of us ride so light as we did when we first entered the corps." With which, and leaving the Colonel to dress himself, Macmurdo turned round toward the wall and resumed the

perusal of *Bell's Life* until such time as his friend's toilet was complete, and he was at liberty to commence his own.

CHAPTER LIV

Becky did not rally from the state of stupor and confusion in which the events of the previous night had plunged her intrepid spirit until the bells of the Curzon Street chapels were ringing for afternoon service, and rising from her bed, she began to ply her own bell in order to summon the French maid who had left her some hours before.

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley rang many times in vain, and though on the last occasion she rang with such vehemence as to pull down the bell rope, Mademoiselle Fifine did not make her appearance—no, not though her mistress, in a great pet and with the bell rope in her hand, came out to the landing place with her hair over her shoulders and screamed out repeatedly for her attendant.

The truth is, she had quitted the premises for many hours, and upon that permission which is called French leave among us. After packing up the trinkets in the drawing-room, mademoiselle had ascended to her own apartments, packed and corded her own boxes there, tripped out and called a cab for herself, brought down her trunks with her own hand, and without even so much as asking the aid of any of the other servants—who would probably have refused it, as they hated her cordially—and without wishing any one of them good-by, had made her exit from Curzon Street.

The game, in her opinion, was over in that little domestic establishment. Fifine went off in a cab, as we have known more exalted persons of her nation to do under similar circumstances; but more provident or lucky than these, she secured not only her property, but some of her mistress's (if indeed that lady could be said to have any property at all), and not only carried off the trinkets before alluded to and some favorite dresses on which she had long kept her eye, but four richly gilt Louis Quatorze candlesticks, six gilt albums, keepsakes, and books of beauty, a gold-enameled snuffbox which had once belonged to Madame du Barri, and the sweetest little inkstand and mother-of-pearl blotting book, which Becky used when she composed her charming little pink notes, had vanished from the premises in Curzon Street together with Mademoiselle Fifine, and all the silver laid on the table for the little *festin* which Rawdon interrupted. The plated ware mademoiselle left behind her as too cumbrous, probably, for which reason, no doubt, she also left the fire irons, the chimney glasses, and the rosewood cottage piano.

Hearing a buzz and a stir below, and indignant at the impudence of those servants, who would not answer her summons, Mrs. Crawley flung her morning robe round her and descended majestically to the drawing-room, whence the noise proceeded.

The cook was there with blackened face, seated on the beautiful chintz

sofa by the side of Mrs. Raggles, to whom she was administering maraschino. The page with the sugar-loaf buttons who carried about Becky's notes and jumped about her little carriage with such alacrity was now engaged putting his fingers into a cream dish. The footman was talking to Raggles, who had a face full of perplexity and woe—and yet, though the door was open and Becky had been screaming a half a dozen of times a few feet off, not one of her attendants had obeyed her call. "Have a little drop, do'ee, now, Mrs. Raggles," the cook was saying as Becky entered, the white dressing gown flouncing around her.

"Simpson! Trotter!" the mistress of the house cried in great wrath. "How dare you stay here when you heard me call? How dare you sit down in my presence? Where's my maid?" The page withdrew his fingers from his mouth with a momentary terror, but the cook took off a glass of maraschino, of which Mrs. Raggles had had enough, staring at Becky over the little gilt glass as she drained its contents. The liquor appeared to give the odious rebel courage.

"*Your* sofy, indeed!" Mrs. Cook said. "I'm a settin' on Mrs. Raggles's sofy. Don't you stir, Mrs. Raggles, mum. I'm a settin' on Mr. and Mrs. Raggles's sofy, which they bought with honest money, and very dear it cost 'em too. And I'm thinkin' if I set here until I'm paid my wages I shall set a precious long time, Mrs. Raggles, and set I will, too—ha! ha!" And with this she filled herself another glass of liquor, and drank it with a more hideously satirical air.

"Trotter! Simpson! Turn that drunken wretch out!" screamed Mrs. Crawley.

"I shawn't," said Trotter, the footman. "Turn her out yourself. Pay our selleries and turn me out, too. *We'll* go fast enough."

"Are you all here to insult me?" cried Becky in a fury. "When Colonel Crawley comes home I'll——"

At this the servants burst into a hoarse hawhaw, in which, however, Raggles, who still kept a most melancholy countenance, did not join. "He ain't a-coming back," Mr. Trotter resumed. "He sent for his things, and I wouldn't let 'em go, although Mr. Raggles would. And I don't b'lieve he's no more Colonel than I am. He's hoff, and I suppose you're a goin' after him. You're no better than swindlers, both on you. Don't be a-bullyin' *me*. I won't stand it. Pay us our selleries, I say. Pay us our selleries." It was evident from Mr. Trotter's flushed countenance and defective intonation that he too had had recourse to vinous stimulus.

"Mr. Raggles," said Becky, in a passion of vexation, "you will not surely let me be insulted by that drunken man?" "Hold your noise, Trotter, do now," said Simpson the page. He was affected by his mistress's deplorable situation, and succeeded in preventing an outrageous denial of the epithet "drunken" on the footman's part.

"Oh, mam," said Raggles, "I never thought to live to see this year day. I've known the Crawley family ever since I was born. I lived butler with Miss Crawley for thirty years, and I little thought one of the family was a goin' to ruing me—yes, ruing me," said the poor fellow with tears in his eyes. "Har you a goin' to pay me? You've lived in this 'ouse four year. You've 'ad my

substance, my plate and linning. You ho me a milk and butter bill of two 'undred pound, you must 'ave noo-laid heggs for your homlets, and cream for your spanil dog."

"She didn't care what her flesh and blood had," interposed the cook. "Many's the time he'd have starved but for me."

"He's a charity boy now, Cooky," said Mr. Trotter, with a drunken "ha! ha!"—and honest Raggles continued, in a lamentable tone, an enumeration of his griefs. All he said was true. Becky and her husband had ruined him. He had bills coming due next week and no means to meet them. He would be sold up and turned out of his shop and his house because he had trusted to the Crawley family. His tears and lamentations made Becky more peevish than ever.

"You all seem to be against me," she said, bitterly. "What do you want? I can't pay you on Sunday. Come back tomorrow and I'll pay you everything. I thought Colonel Crawley had settled with you. He will tomorrow. I declare to you upon my honor that he left this morning with fifteen hundred pounds in his pocketbook. He has left me nothing. Apply to him. Give me a bonnet and shawl and let me go out and find him. There was a difference between us this morning. You all seem to know it. I promise you upon my word that you shall all be paid. He has got a good appointment. Let me out and find him."

This audacious statement caused Raggles and the other personages present to look at one another with a wild surprise, and with it Rebecca left them. She went up stairs and dressed herself, this time without the aid of her French maid. She went into Rawdon's room and there saw that a trunk and bag were packed ready for removal with a pencil direction that they should be given when called for. Then she went into the Frenchwoman's garret; everything was clean and all the drawers emptied there. She bethought herself of the trinkets which had been left on the ground, and felt certain that the woman had fled. "Good heavens! Was ever such ill luck as mine?" she said. "To be so near, and to lose all. Is it all too late?" No, there was one chance more.

She dressed herself and went away unmolested this time, but alone. It was four o'clock. She went swiftly down the streets (she had no money to pay for a carriage), and never stopped until she came to Sir Pitt Crawley's door in Great Gaunt Street. Where was Lady Jane Crawley? She was at church. Becky was not sorry. Sir Pitt was in his study, and had given orders not to be disturbed. She must see him. She slipped by the sentinel in livery at once, and was in Sir Pitt's room before the astonished Baronet had even laid down the paper.

He turned red and started back from her with a look of great alarm and horror.

"Do not look so," she said. "I am not guilty, Pitt, dear Pitt. You were my friend once. Before God, I am not guilty. I seem so. Everything is against me. And oh, at such a moment! Just when all my hopes were about to be realized, just when happiness was in store for us."

"Is this true, what I see in the paper, then?" Sir Pitt said—a paragraph in which had greatly surprised him.

"It is true. Lord Steyne told me on Friday night, the night of that fatal ball. He had been promised an appointment any time these six months. Mr. Martyr, the Colonial Secretary, told him yesterday that it was made out. That unlucky arrest ensued, that horrible meeting. I was only guilty of too much devotedness to Rawdon's service. I have received Lord Steyne alone a hundred times before. I confess I had money of which Rawdon knew nothing. Don't you know how careless he is of it, and could I dare to confide it to him?" And so she went on with a perfectly connected story, which she poured into the ears of her perplexed kinsman.

It was to the following effect. Becky owned, and with perfect frankness, but deep contrition, that having remarked Lord Steyne's partiality for her (at the mention of which Pitt blushed), and being secure of her virtue, she had determined to turn the great peer's attachment to the advantage of herself and her family. "I looked for a peerage for you, Pitt," she said. (The brother-in-law again turned red.) "We have talked about it. Your genius and Lord Steyne's interest made it more than probable had not this dreadful calamity come to put an end to all our hopes. But first, I own that it was my object to rescue my dear husband—him whom I love in spite of all his ill usage and suspicions of me—to remove him from the poverty and ruin which was impending over us. I saw Lord Steyne's partiality for me," she said, casting down her eyes.

"I own that I did everything in my power to make myself pleasing to him, and as far as an honest woman may, to secure his—his esteem. It was only on Friday morning that the news arrived of the death of the Governor of Coventry Island, and my lord instantly secured the appointment for my dear husband. It was intended as a surprise for him—he was to see it in the papers today. Even after that horrid arrest took place (the expenses of which Lord Steyne generously said he would settle, so that I was in a manner prevented from coming to my husband's assistance), my lord was laughing with me and saying that my dearest Rawdon would be consoled when he read his appointment in the paper in that shocking spon—bailiff's house. And then—then he came home. His suspicions were excited—the dreadful scene took place between my lord and my cruel, cruel Rawdon—and, oh, my God, what will happen next? Pitt, dear Pitt! Pity me, and reconcile us!" And as she spoke she flung herself down on her knees and bursting into tears, seized hold of Pitt's hand, which she kissed passionately.

It was in this very attitude that Lady Jane, who, returning from church, ran to her husband's room directly she heard Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was closeted there, found the Baronet and his sister-in-law.

"I am surprised that woman has the audacity to enter this house," Lady Jane said, trembling in every limb and turning quite pale. (Her ladyship had sent out her maid directly after breakfast, who had communicated with Raggles and Rawdon Crawley's household, who had told her all, and a great deal more than they knew, of that story, and many others beside.) "How dare Mrs. Crawley to enter the house of—of an honest family?"

Sir Pitt started back amazed at his wife's display of vigor. Becky still kept her kneeling posture and clung to Sir Pitt's hand.

"Tell her that she does not know all. Tell her that I am innocent, dear Pitt," she whimpered out.

"Upon my word, my love, I think you do Mrs. Crawley injustice," Sir Pitt said, at which speech Rebecca was vastly relieved. "Indeed, I believe her to be——"

"To be what?" cried out Lady Jane, her clear voice thrilling and her heart beating violently as she spoke. "To be a wicked woman—a heartless mother, a false wife? She never loved her dear little boy, who used to fly here and tell me of her cruelty to him. She never came into a family but she strove to bring misery with her, and to weaken the most sacred affections with her wicked flattery and falsehoods. She has deceived her husband, as she has deceived everybody. Her soul is black with vanity, worldliness, and all sorts of crime. I tremble when I touch her. I keep my children out of her sight. I——"

"Lady Jane!" cried Sir Pitt, starting up. "This is really language——"

"I have been a true and faithful wife to you, Sir Pitt," Lady Jane continued, intrepidly. "I have kept my marriage vow as I made it to God, and have been obedient and gentle as a wife should. But righteous obedience has its limits, and I declare that I will not bear that—that woman again under my roof. If she enters it, I and my children will leave it. She is not worthy to sit down with Christian people. You—you must choose, sir, between her and me." And with this my lady swept out of the room fluttering with her own audacity, and leaving Rebecca and Sir Pitt not a little astonished at it.

As for Becky, she was not hurt—nay, she was pleased. "It was the diamond clasp you gave me," she said to Sir Pitt, reaching him out her hand, and before she left him (for which event you may be sure my Lady Jane was looking out from her dressing-room window in the upper story) the Baronet had promised to go and seek out his brother and endeavor to bring about a reconciliation.

Rawdon found some of the young fellows of the regiment seated in the messroom at breakfast, and was induced without much difficulty to partake of that meal and of the deviled legs of fowls and soda water with which these young gentlemen fortified themselves. Then they had a conversation befitting the day and their time of life—about the next pigeon match at Battersea, with relative bets upon Ross and Osbaldiston; about Mademoiselle Ariane of the French opera, and who had left her, and how she was consoled by Panther Carr; and about the fight between the Butcher and the Pet, and the probabilities that it was a cross.

So they went on talking about dancers, fights, drinking, demireps, until Macmurdo came down and joined the boys and the conversation. By the time Mac had finished a copious breakfast, most of the others had concluded their meal, and Mac and Rawdon walked off to the club, neither, of course, having given any hint of the business which was occupying their minds. Both, on the other hand, had joined pretty gaily in the conversation, for why should they

interrupt it? Feasting, drinking, ribaldry, laughter, go on alongside of a sorts of other occupations in Vanity Fair. The crowds were pouring out c church as Rawdon and his friend passed down St. James's Street and entere into their club.

The old bucks and habitués who ordinarily stand gaping and grinning ou of the great front window of the club had not arrived at their posts as ye the newspaper room was almost empty. One man was present whom Rawdo did not know; another to whom he owed a little score for whist, and whor in consequence he did not care to meet; a third was reading the *Royalis* Sunday paper at the table, and looking up at Crawley with some interest, saic "Crawley, I congratulate you."

"What do you mean?" said the Colonel.

"It's in the *Observer* and the *Royalist* too," said Mr. Smith.

"What?" Rawdon cried, turning very red. He thought that the affair wit Lord Steyne was already in the public prints. Smith looked up wonderin and smiling at the agitation which the Colonel exhibited as he took up th paper and trembling, began to read.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Brown (the gentleman with whom Rawdon had th outstanding whist account) had been talking about the Colonel just befor he came in.

"It is come just in the nick of time," said Smith. "I suppose Crawley ha not a shilling in the world."

"It's a wind that blows everybody good," Mr. Brown said. "He can't g away without paying me a pony he owes me."

"What's the salary?" asked Smith.

"Two or three thousand," answered the other. "But the climate's so inferna they don't enjoy it long. Liverseege died after eighteen months of it, and th man before went off in six weeks, I hear."

"Some people say his brother is a very clever man." "I always found hir a damn bore," Smith ejaculated. "He must have good interest, though. H must have got the Colonel the place."

"*He!*" said Brown, with a sneer. "Pooh. It was Lord Steyne got it."

"How do you mean?"

"A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband," answered the othe enigmatically, and went on to read his papers.

Rawdon, for his part, read in the *Royalist* the following astonishin paragraph:

> Governorship of Coventry Island.—H.M.S. Yellowjack, Commander Jaunders, has brought letters and papers from Coventry Island. H. E. Sir Thomas Liverseege had fallen a victim to the prevailing fever at Swampton. His loss is deeply felt in the flourishing colony. We hear that the governorship has been offered to Colonel Rawdon Crawley, C.B., a distinguished Waterloo officer. We need not only men of acknowledged bravery, but men of administrative talents, to superintend the affairs of our colonies; and we have no doubt that the gentleman selected by the

Colonial Office to fill the lamented vacancy which has occurred at Coventry Island is admirably calculated for the post which he is about to occupy.

Coventry Island! Where was it? Who had appointed him to the government? "You must take me out as your secretary, old boy," Captain Macmurdo said, laughing, and as Crawley and his friend sat wondering and perplexed over the announcement the club waiter brought to the Colonel a card on which the name of Mr. Wenham was engraved, who begged to see Colonel Crawley.

The Colonel and his aide-de-camp went out to meet the gentleman, rightly conjecturing that he was an emissary of Lord Steyne.

"How d'ye do, Crawley? I am glad to see you," said Mr. Wenham with a bland smile, and grasping Crawley's hand with great cordiality.

"You come, I suppose, from——"

"Exactly," said Mr. Wenham.

"Then this is my friend Captain Macmurdo, of the Life Guards Green."

"Delighted to know Captain Macmurdo, I'm sure," Mr. Wenham said, and tendered another smile and shake of the hand to the second. Mac put out one finger, armed with a buckskin glove, and made a very frigid bow to Mr. Wenham over his tight cravat. He was, perhaps, discontented at being put in communicaton with a *pékin*, and thought that Lord Steyne should have sent him a Colonel at the very least.

"As Macmurdo acts for me, and knows what I mean," Crawley said, "I had better retire and leave you together."

"Of course," said Macmurdo.

"By no means, my dear Colonel," Mr. Wenham said. "The interview which I had the honor of requesting was with you personally, though the company of Captain Macmurdo cannot fail to be also most pleasing. In fact, Captain, I hope that our conversation will lead to none but the most agreeable results, very different from those which my friend Colonel Crawley appears to anticipate."

"Humph!" said Captain Macmurdo. "Be hanged to these civilians," he thought to himself. "They are always for arranging and speechifying." Mr. Wenham took a chair which was not offered to him, took a paper from his pocket, and resumed:

"You have seen this gratifying announcement in the papers this morning, Colonel? Government has secured a most valuable servant, and you, if you accept office, as I presume you will, an excellent appointment. Three thousand a year, delightful climate, excellent Government House, all your own way in the colony, and a certain promotion. I congratulate you with all my heart. I presume you know, gentlemen, to whom my friend is indebted for this place of patronage?"

"Hanged if I know," the Captain said. His principal turned very red.

"To one of the most generous and kindest men in the world, as he is one of the greatest—to my excellent friend the Marquis of Steyne."

"I'll see him damned before I take his place," growled out Rawdon.

"You are irritated against my noble friend," Mr. Wenham calmly resumed "and now, in the name of common sense and justice, tell me why."

"*Why?*" cried Rawdon, in surprise.

"Why? Dammy!" said the Captain, ringing his stick on the ground.

"Dammy, indeed," said Mr. Wenham, with the most agreeable smile. "Still look at the matter as a man of the world—as an honest man—and see if you have not been in the wrong. You come home from a journey and find—what?—my Lord Steyne supping at your house in Curzon Street with Mrs Crawley. Is the circumstance strange or novel? Has he not been a hundred times before in the same position? Upon my honor and word as a gentleman I declare I think that your suspicions are monstrous and utterly unfounded and that they injure an honorable gentleman who has proved his goodwill toward you by a thousand benefactions—and a most spotless and innocent lady."

"You don't mean to say that—that Crawley's mistaken?" said Mr. Macmurdo

"I believe that Mrs. Crawley is as innocent as my wife, Mrs. Wenham," Mr. Wenham said with great energy. "I believe that, misled by an infernal jealousy, my friend here strikes a blow against not only an infirm and old man of high station, his constant friend and benefactor, but against his wife his own dearest honor, his son's future reputation, and his own prospects in life

"I will tell you what happened," Mr. Wenham continued with great solemnity. "I was sent for this morning by my Lord Steyne, and found him in a pitiable state, as I need hardly inform Colonel Crawley any man of age and infirmity would be after a personal conflict with a man of your strength I say to your face, it was a cruel advantage you took of that strength, Colonel Crawley. It was not only the body of my noble and excellent friend which was wounded—his heart, sir, was bleeding. A man whom he had loaded with benefits and regarded with affection had subjected him to the foulest indignity What was this very appointment which appears in the journals of today but a proof of his kindness to you? When I saw his lordship this morning I found him in a state pitiable indeed to see, and as anxious as you are to revenge the outrage committed upon him, by blood. You know he has given his proofs, presume, Colonel Crawley?"

"He has plenty of pluck," said the Colonel. "Nobody ever said he hadn't."

"His first order to me was to write a letter of challenge, and to carry it to Colonel Crawley. 'One or other of us,' he said, 'must not survive the outrage of last night.' "

Crawley nodded. "You're coming to the point, Wenham," he said.

"I tried my utmost to calm Lord Steyne. Good God, sir," I said, "how I regret that Mrs. Wenham and myself had not accepted Mrs. Crawley's invitation to sup with her."

"She asked you to sup with her?" Captain Macmurdo said.

"After the opera. Here's the note of invitation—stop—no, this is another paper—I thought I had it, but it's of no consequence, and I pledge you my word to the fact. If we had come—and it was only one of Mrs. Wenham's

headaches which prevented us—she suffers under them a good deal, especially in the spring—if we had come, and you had returned home, there would have been no quarrel, no insult, no suspicion—and so it is positively because my poor wife has a headache that you are to bring death down upon two men of honor, and plunge two of the most excellent and ancient families in the kingdom into disgrace and sorrow."

Mr. Macmurdo looked at his principal with the air of a man profoundly puzzled, and Rawdon felt with a kind of rage that his prey was escaping him. He did not believe a word of the story, and yet how discredit or disprove it?

Mr. Wenham continued with the same fluent oratory, which in his place in Parliament he had so often practiced. "I sat for an hour or more by Lord Steyne's bedside, beseeching, imploring Lord Steyne to forgo his intention of demanding a meeting. I pointed out to him that the circumstances were after all suspicious—they were suspicious. I acknowledge it—any man in your position might have been taken in. I said that a man furious with jealousy is to all intents and purposes a madman, and should be as such regarded—that a duel between you must lead to the disgrace of all parties concerned—that a man of his lordship's exalted station had no right in these days, when the most atrocious revolutionary principles and the most dangerous leveling doctrines are preached among the vulgar, to create a public scandal; and that, however innocent, the common people would insist that he was guilty. In fine, I implored him not to send the challenge."

"I don't believe one word of the whole story," said Rawdon, grinding his teeth. "I believe it a damned lie, and that you're in it, Mr. Wenham. If the challenge don't come from him, by Jove it shall come from me."

Mr. Wenham turned deadly pale at this savage interruption of the Colonel, and looked toward the door.

But he found a champion in Captain Macmurdo. That gentleman rose up with an oath and rebuked Rawdon for his language. "You put the affair into my hands, and you shall act as I think fit, by Jove, and not as you do. You have no right to insult Mr. Wenham with this sort of language, and dammy, Mr. Wenham, you deserve an apology. And as for a challenge to Lord Steyne, you may get somebody else to carry it. I won't. If my lord after being thrashed chooses to sit still, dammy, let him. And as for the affair with—with Mrs. Crawley, my belief is there's nothing proved at all, that your wife's innocent, as innocent as Mr. Wenham says she is—and at any rate, that you would be a damn fool not to take the place and hold your tongue."

"Captain Macmurdo, you speak like a man of sense," Mr. Wenham cried out, immensely relieved. "I forget any words that Colonel Crawley has used in the irritation of the moment."

"I thought you would," Rawdon said with a sneer.

"Shut your mouth, you old stoopid," the Captain said good-naturedly. "Mr. Wenham ain't a fighting man, and quite right, too."

"This matter, in my belief," the Steyne emissary cried, "ought to be buried in the most profound oblivion. A word concerning it should never pass these

doors. I speak in the interest of my friend as well as of Colonel Crawley, wh persists in considering me his enemy."

"I suppose Lord Steyne won't talk about it very much," said Captai Macmurdo, "and I don't see why our side should. The affair ain't a ver pretty one any way you take it, and the less said about it the better. It's yo are thrashed, and not us, and if you are satisfied, why, I think we should be.

Mr. Wenham took his hat upon this and Captain Macmurdo, following hir to the door, shut it upon himself and Lord Steyne's agent, leaving Rawdo chafing within. When the two were on the other side, Macmurdo looke hard at the other ambassador, and with an expression of anything but respec on his round jolly face.

"You don't stick at a trifle, Mr. Wenham," he said.

"You flatter me, Captain Macmurdo," answered the other with a smile "Upon my honor and conscience now, Mrs. Crawley did ask us to sup afte the opera."

"Of course, and Mrs. Wenham had one of her headaches. I say, I've got thousand-pound note here, which I will give you if you will give me a receip please, and I will put the note up in an envelope for Lord Steyne. My ma shan't fight him. But we had rather not take his money."

"It was all a mistake—all a mistake, my dear sir," the other said with th utmost innocence of manner, and was bowed down the club steps by Captai Macmurdo just as Sir Pitt Crawley ascended them. There was a sligh acquaintance between these two gentlemen, and the Captain, going back wit the Baronet to the room where the latter's brother was, told Sir Pitt i confidence that he had made the affair all right between Lord Steyne and th Colonel.

Sir Pitt was well pleased, of course, at this intelligence, and congratulate his brother warmly upon the peaceful issue of the affair, making appropriat moral remarks upon the evils of dueling and the unsatisfactory nature of tha sort of settlement of disputes.

And after this preface he tried with all his eloquence to effect a reconcilia tion between Rawdon and his wife. He recapitulated the statements whic Becky had made, pointed out the probabilities of their truth, and asserted hi own firm belief in her innocence.

But Rawdon would not hear of it. "She has kep' money concealed fro me these ten years," he said. "She swore, last night only, she had none fro Steyne. She knew it was all up directly I found it. If she's not guilty, Pit she's as bad as guilty, and I'll never see her again—never." His head sank dow on his chest as he spoke the words, and he looked quite broken and sad.

"Poor old boy," Macmurdo said, shaking his head.

Rawdon Crawley resisted for some time the idea of taking the place whic had been procured for him by so odious a patron, and was also for removin the boy from the school where Lord Steyne's interest had placed him. He wa induced, however, to acquiesce in these benefits by the entreaties of his brothe and Macmurdo; but mainly by the latter pointing out to him what a fur

Steyne would be in to think that his enemy's fortune was made through his means.

When the Marquis of Steyne came abroad after his accident, the Colonial Secretary bowed up to him and congratulated himself and the service upon having made so excellent an appointment. These congratulations were received with a degree of gratitude which may be imagined on the part of Lord Steyne.

The secret of the rencontre between him and Colonel Crawley was buried in the profoundest oblivion, as Wenham said—that is, by the seconds and the principals. But before that evening was over it was talked of at fifty dinner tables in Vanity Fair. It was town talk for at least three days, and was only kept out of the newspapers by the exertions of Mr. Wagg, acting upon a hint from Mr. Wenham.

The bailiffs and brokers seized upon poor Raggles in Curzon Street, and the late fair tenant of that poor little mansion was in the meanwhile—where? Who cared? Who asked after a day or two? Was she guilty or not? We all know how charitable the world is, and how the verdict of Vanity Fair goes when there is a doubt. Some people said she had gone to Naples in pursuit of Lord Steyne, while others averred that his lordship quitted that city and fled to Palermo on hearing of Becky's arrival. Some said she was living in Pierstadt, and had become a *dame d' honneur* to the Queen of Bulgaria; some that she was at Boulogne; and others, at a boardinghouse at Cheltenham.

Rawdon made her a tolerable annuity, and we may be sure that she was a woman who could make a little money go a great way, as the saying is. He would have paid his debts on leaving England could he have got any insurance office to take his life, but the climate of Coventry Island was so bad that he could borrow no money on the strength of his salary. He remitted, however, to his brother punctually, and wrote to his little boy regularly every mail. He kept Macmurdo in cigars, and sent over quantities of shells, cayenne pepper, hot pickles, guava jelly, and colonial produce to Lady Jane. He sent his brother home the *Swamp Town Gazette*, in which the new Governor was praised with immense enthusiasm, whereas the *Swamp Town Sentinel*, whose wife was not asked to Government House, declared that His Excellency was a tyrant compared to whom Nero was an enlightened philanthropist. Little Rawdon used to like to get the papers and read about His Excellency.

His mother never made any movement to see the child. He went home to his aunt for Sundays and holidays. He soon knew every bird's nest about Queen's Crawley, and rode out with Sir Huddleston's hounds, which he admired so on his first well-remembered visit to Hampshire.

CHAPTER LV

GEORGY OSBORNE was now fairly established in his grandfather's mansion in Russell Square, occupant of his father's room in the house and heir apparent of all the splendors there. The good looks, gallant bearing, and gentlemanlike

appearance of the boy won the grandsire's heart for him. Mr. Osborne was a proud of him as ever he had been of the elder George.

The child had many more luxuries and indulgencies than had been awarde to his father. Osborne's commerce had prospered greatly of late years. H wealth and importance in the City had very much increased. He had bee glad enough in former days to put the elder George to a good private schoo and a commission in the army for his son had been a source of no small prid to him. For little George and his future prospects the old man looked muc higher. He would make a gentleman of the little chap, was Mr. Osborne constant saying regarding little Georgy. He saw him in his mind's eye collegian, a Parliament man—a Baronet, perhaps. The old man thought H would die contented if he could see his grandson in a fair way to such honor He would have none but a tiptop college man to educate him—none of you quacks and pretenders—no, no. A few years before, he used to be savage an inveigh against all parsons, scholars, and the like, declaring that they were pack of humbugs and quacks that weren't fit to get their living by grindin Latin and Greek, and a set of supercilious dogs that pretended to look dow on British merchants and gentlemen who could buy up half a hundred of 'em He would mourn now, in a very solemn manner, that his own education ha been neglected, and repeatedly point out in pompous orations to Georgy th necessity and excellence of classical acquirements.

When they met at dinner and the grandsire used to ask the lad what h had been reading during the day, and was greatly interested at the report th boy gave of his own studies, pretending to understand little George when h spoke regarding them. He made a hundred blunders, and showed his ignc rance many a time. It did not increase the respect which the child had for h senior. A quick brain and a better education elsewhere showed the boy ver soon that his grandsire was a dullard, and he began accordingly to comman him and to look down upon him; for his previous education, humble an contracted as it had been, had made a much better gentleman of Georgy tha any plans of his grandfather could make him. He had been brought up by kind, weak, and tender woman who had no pride about anything but abou him, and whose heart was so pure, and whose bearing was so meek and humbl that she could not but needs be a true lady. She busied herself in gent offices and quiet duties. If she never said brilliant things, she never spoke c thought unkind ones. Guileless and artless, loving and pure, indeed how cou our poor little Amelia be other than a real gentlewoman?

Young Georgy lorded over this soft and yielding nature, and the contra of its simplicity and delicacy with the coarse pomposity of the dull old ma with whom he next came in contact made him lord over the latter too. If h had been a Prince Royal he could not have been better brought up to thir well of himself.

Well, then, Master George Osborne had every comfort and luxury that wealthy and lavish old grandfather thought fit to provide. The coachman w instructed to purchase for him the handsomest pony which could be boug for money, and on this George was taught to ride, first at a riding scho

whence, after having performed satisfactorily without stirrups and over the leaping bar, he was conducted through the new road to Regent's Park, and then to Hyde Park, where he rode in state with Martin the coachman behind him. Old Osborne, who took matters more easily in the City now, where he left his affairs to his junior partners, would often ride out with Miss O in the same fashionable direction. As little Georgy came cantering up with his dandified air and his heels down, his grandfather would nudge the lad's aunt and say, "Look, Miss O." And he would laugh, and his face would grow red with pleasure as he nodded out of the window to the boy, as the groom saluted the carriage and the footman saluted Master George. Here too his aunt, Mrs. Frederick Bullock, flung glances of the bitterest hatred at the little upstart as he rode by with his hand on his side and his hat on one ear, as proud as a lord.

Though he was scarcely eleven years of age, Master George wore straps and the most beautiful little boots like a man. He had gilt spurs and a gold-headed whip, and a fine pin in his handkerchief, and the neatest little kid gloves which Lamb's Conduit Street could furnish. His mother had given him a couple of neckcloths and carefully hemmed and made some little shirts for him, but when her Eli came to see the widow, they were replaced by much finer linen. He had little jeweled buttons in the lawn shirt fronts. Her humble presents had been put aside—I believe Miss Osborne had given them to the coachman's boy. Amelia tried to think she was pleased at the change. Indeed she was happy and charmed to see the boy looking so beautiful.

She had had a little black profile of him done for a shilling, and this was hung up by the side of another portrait over her bed. One day the boy came on his accustomed visit, galloping down the little street at Brompton and bringing, as usual, all the inhabitants to the windows to admire his splendor, and with great eagerness and a look of triumph in his face he pulled a case out of his greatcoat—it was a natty white greatcoat, with a cape and a velvet collar—pulled out a red-morocco case, which he gave her.

"I bought it with my own money, Mamma," he said. "I thought you'd like it."

Amelia opened the case, and giving a little cry of delighted affection, seized the boy and embraced him a hundred times. It was a miniature of himself, very prettily done (though not half handsome enough, we may be sure the widow thought). His grandfather had wished to have a picture of him by an artist whose works exhibited in a shop window in Southampton Row had caught the old gentleman's eyes; and George, who had plenty of money, bethought him of asking the painter how much a copy of the little portrait would cost, saying that he would pay for it out of his own money and that he wanted to give it to his mother. The pleased painter executed it for a small price, and old Osborne himself, when he heard of the incident, growled out his satisfaction and gave the boy twice as many sovereigns as he paid for the miniature.

But what was the grandfather's pleasure compared to Amelia's ecstasy? That proof of the boy's affection charmed her so that she thought no child

in the world was like hers for goodness. For long weeks after the thought of his love made her happy. She slept better with the picture under her pillow, and how many many times did she kiss it, and weep and pray over it! A small kindness from those she loved made that timid heart grateful. Since her parting with George she had had no such joy and consolation.

At his new home Master George ruled like a lord. At dinner he invited the ladies to drink wine with the utmost coolness, and took off his champagne in a way which charmed his old grandfather. "Look at him," the old man would say, nudging his neighbor with a delighted purple face. "Did you ever see such a chap? Lord, Lord, he'll be ordering a dressing case next, and razors to shave with, I'm blest if he won't!"

Young Todd of Coram Street, Russell Square, was Master George's great friend and admirer. They both had a taste for painting theatrical characters, for hardbake and raspberry tarts, for sliding and skating in the Regent's Park and the Serpentine when the weather permitted—for going to the play, whither they were often conducted, by Mr. Osborne's orders, by Rowson, Master George's appointed body servant, with whom they sat in great comfort in the pit.

In the company of this gentleman they visited all the principal theaters of the metropolis—knew the names of all the actors from Drury Lane to Sadler's Wells; and performed, indeed, many of the plays to the Todd family and their youthful friends, with West's famous characters, on their pasteboard theater. Rowson, the footman, who was of a generous disposition, would not unfrequently, when in cash, treat his young master to oysters after the play, and to a glass of rum shrub for a nightcap. We may be pretty certain that Mr. Rowson profited in his turn by his young master's liberality and gratitude for the pleasures to which the footman inducted him.

A famous tailor from the West End of the town—Mr. Osborne would have none of your City or Holborn bunglers, he said, for the boy (though a City tailor was good enough for *him*)—was summoned to ornament little George's person, and was told to spare no expense in so doing. So, Mr. Woolsey of Conduit Street gave a loose to his imagination, and sent the child home fancy trousers, fancy waistcoats, and fancy jackets enough to furnish a school of little dandies. Georgy had little white waistcoats for evening parties and little cut-velvet waistcoats for dinners, and a dear little darling shawl dressing gown for all the world like a little man. He dressed for dinner every day, "like a regular West End swell," as his grandfather remarked. One of the domestics was appointed to his special service, attended him at his toilet, answered his bell, and brought him his letters always on a silver tray.

Georgy after breakfast would sit in the armchair in the dining-room and read the *Morning Post*, just like a grown-up man. "How he *du* dam and swear," the servants would cry, delighted at his precocity. Those who remembered the Captain his father declared Master George was his pa every inch of him. He made the house lively by his activity, his imperiousness, his scolding and his good nature.

George's education was confided to a neighboring scholar and private

pedagogue who "prepared young noblemen and gentlemen for the universities, the senate, and the learned professions; whose system did not embrace the degrading corporal severities still practiced at the ancient places of education, and in whose family the pupils would find the elegances of refined society and the confidence and affection of a home." It was this way that the Reverend Lawrence Veal of Hart Street, Bloomsbury, and domestic chaplain to the Earl of Bareacres, strove with Mrs. Veal his wife to entice pupils.

By thus advertising and pushing sedulously, the domestic chaplain and his lady generally succeeded in having one or two scholars by them who paid a high figure, and were thought to be in uncommonly comfortable quarters. There was a large West Indian, whom nobody came to see, with a mahogany complexion, a woolly head, and an exceedingly dandified appearance. There was another hulking boy of three-and-twenty whose education had been neglected, and whom Mr. and Mrs. Veal were to introduce into the polite world. There were two sons of Colonel Bangles of the East India Company's service. These four sat down to dinner at Mrs. Veal's genteel board when Georgy was introduced to her establishment.

Georgy was, like some dozen other pupils, only a day boy; he arrived in the morning under the guardianship of his friend Mr. Rowson, and if it was fine, would ride away in the afternoon on his pony, followed by the groom. The wealth of his grandfather was reported in the school to be prodigious. The Reverend Mr. Veal used to compliment Georgy upon it personally, warning him that he was destined for a high station, that it became him to prepare, by sedulity and docility in youth, for the lofty duties to which he would be called in mature age, that obedience in the child was the best preparation for command in the man, and that he therefore begged George would not bring toffy into the school and ruin the health of the Masters Bangles, who had everything they wanted at the elegant and abundant table of Mrs. Veal.

With respect to learning, "the curriculum," as Mr. Veal loved to call it, was of prodigious extent, and the young gentlemen in Hart Street might learn a something of every known science. The Reverend Mr. Veal had an orrery, an electrifying machine, a turning lathe, a theater (in the washhouse), a chemical apparatus, and what he called a select library of all the works of the best authors of ancient and modern times and languages. He took the boys to the British Museum and descanted upon the antiquities and the specimens of natural history there, so that audiences would gather round him as he spoke, and all Bloomsbury highly admired him as a prodigiously well-informed man. And whenever he spoke (which he did almost always), he took care to produce the very finest and longest words of which the vocabulary gave him the use, rightly judging that it was as cheap to employ a handsome, large, and sonorous epithet as to use a little stingy one.

To this great man George's education was for some time entrusted. Amelia was bewildered by his phrases, but thought him a prodigy of learning. That poor widow made friends of Mrs. Veal, for reasons of her own. She liked to be in the house, and see Georgy coming to school there. She liked to be asked

to Mrs. Veal's conversazioni, which took place once a month (as you were informed on pink cards with ΑΘΗΝΗ engraved on them), and where the professor welcomed his pupils and their friends to weak tea and scientific conversation. Poor little Amelia never missed one of these entertainments, and thought them delicious so long as she might have Georgy sitting by her. And she would walk from Brompton in any weather, and embrace Mrs. Veal with tearful gratitude for the delightful evening she had passed when the company having retired and Georgy gone off with Mr. Rowson, his attendant, poor Mrs. Osborne put on her cloaks and her shawls preparatory to walking home.

As for the learning which Georgy imbibed under this valuable master of a hundred sciences, to judge from the weekly reports which the lad took home to his grandfather his progress was remarkable. The names of a score or more of desirable branches of knowledge were printed in a table, and the pupil's progress in each was marked by the professor. In Greek Georgy was pronounced *aristos*, in Latin *optimus*, in French *très bien*, and so forth; and everybody had prizes for everything at the end of the year.

Thus it seemed to be decreed by fate that Georgy was to domineer over everybody with whom he came in contact, and that friends, relatives, and domestics were all to bow the knee before the little fellow. It must be owned that he accommodated himself very willingly to this arrangement. Most people do so. And Georgy liked to play the part of master, and perhaps had a natural aptitude for it.

In Russell Square everybody was afraid of Mr. Osborne, and Mr. Osborne was afraid of Georgy. The boy's dashing manners and offhand rattle about books and learning, his likeness to his father (dead unreconciled in Brussels yonder), awed the old gentleman and gave the young boy the mastery. The old man would start at some hereditary feature or tone unconsciously used by the little lad and fancy that George's father was again before him. He tried by indulgence to the grandson to make up for harshness to the elder George. People were surprised at his gentleness to the boy. He growled and swore at Miss Osborne as usual, and would smile when George came down late for breakfast.

Miss Osborne, George's aunt, was a faded old spinster, broken down by more than forty years of dullness and coarse usage. It was easy for a lad of spirit to master *her*. And whenever George wanted anything from her, from the jam pots in her cupboards to the cracked and dry old colors in her paint-box, Georgy took possession of the object of his desire, which obtained, he took no further notice of his aunt.

The broken-spirited old maternal grandfather was likewise subject to the little tyrant. He could not help respecting a lad who had such fine clothes, and rode with a groom behind him. Georgy, on his side, was in the constant habit of hearing coarse abuse and vulgar satire leveled at John Sedley by his pitiless old enemy, Mr. Osborne. Osborne used to call the other the old pauper, the old coal man, the old bankrupt, and by many other such names of brutal contumely. How was little George to respect a man so prostrate? A few

months after he was with his paternal grandfather, Mrs. Sedley died. There had been little love between her and the child. He did not care to show much grief. He came down to visit his mother in a fine new suit of mourning, and was very angry that he could not go to a play upon which he had set his heart.

The illness of that old lady had been the occupation and perhaps the safeguard of Amelia. What do men know about women's martyrdoms? We should go mad had we to endure the hundredth part of those daily pains which are meekly borne by many women. Ceaseless slavery meeting with no reward; constant gentleness and kindness met by cruelty as constant; love, labor, patience, watchfulness, without even so much as the acknowledgment of a good word--all this how many of them have to bear in quiet and appear abroad with cheerful faces as if they felt nothing. Tender slaves that they are, they must needs be hypocrites and weak.

From her chair Amelia's mother had taken to her bed, which she had never left, and from which Mrs. Osborne herself was never absent except when she ran to see George. The old lady grudged her even those rare visits—she who had been a kind, smiling, good-natured mother once in the days of her prosperity, but whom poverty and infirmities had broken down. Her illness or estrangement did not affect Amelia. They rather enabled her to support the other calamity under which she was suffering, and from the thoughts of which she was kept by the ceaseless calls of the invalid. Amelia bore her harshness quite gently, smoothed the uneasy pillow, was always ready with a soft answer to the watchful, querulous voice, soothed the sufferer with words of hope such as her pious simple heart could best feel and utter, and closed the eyes that had once looked so tenderly upon her.

Then all her time and tenderness were devoted to the consolation and comfort of the bereaved old father, who was stunned by the blow which had befallen him, and stood utterly alone in the world. His wife, his honor, his fortune—everything he loved best—had fallen away from him. There was only Amelia to stand by and support with her gentle arms the tottering, heartbroken old man.

One day as the young gentlemen were assembled in the study at the Reverend Mr. Veal's and the domestic chaplain to the Right Honorable the Earl of Bareacres was spouting away as usual, a smart carriage drove up to the door decorated with the statue of Athene, and two gentlemen stepped out.

Everybody was interested, from the domestic chaplain himself, who hoped he saw the fathers of some future pupils, down to Master Georgy, glad of any pretext for laying his book down.

The boy in the shabby livery with the faded copper buttons, who always thrust himself into the tight coat to open the door, came into the study and said, "Two gentlemen want to see Master Osborne." The professor had had a trifling altercation in the morning with that young gentleman, owing to a difference about the introduction of crackers in schooltime, but his face resumed its habitual expression of bland courtesy as he said, "Master Osborne, I give you full permission to go and see your carriage friends—to whom I beg you to convey the respectful compliments of myself and Mrs. Veal."

Georgy went into the reception room and saw two strangers, whom he looked at with his head up, in his usual haughty manner. One was fat, with mustaches, and the other was lean and long, in a blue frock coat, with a brown face and a grizzled head.

"My God, how like he is!" said the long gentleman, with a start. "Can you guess who we are, George?"

The boy's face flushed up, as it did usually when he was moved, and his eyes brightened. "I don't know the other," he said, "but I should think you must be Major Dobbin."

Indeed it was our old friend. His voice trembled with pleasure as he greeted the boy, and taking both the other's hands in his own, drew the lad to him.

"Your mother has talked to you about me, has she?" he said.

"That she has," Georgy answered, "hundreds and hundreds of times."

CHAPTER LVI

It was one of the many causes for personal pride with which old Osborne chose to recreate himself that Sedley, his ancient rival, enemy, and benefactor, was in his last days so utterly defeated and humiliated as to be forced to accept pecuniary obligations at the hands of the man who had most injured and insulted him. The successful man of the world cursed the old pauper, and relieved him from time to time. As he furnished George with money for his mother, he gave the boy to understand by hints delivered in his brutal, coarse way that George's maternal grandfather was but a wretched old bankrupt and dependent, and that John Sedley might thank the man to whom he owed already ever so much money for the aid which his generosity now chose to administer. George carried the pompous supplies to his mother and the shattered old widower whom it was now the main business of her life to tend and comfort. The little fellow patronized the feeble and disappointed old man.

It may have shown a want of "proper pride" in Amelia that she chose to accept these money benefits at the hands of her father's enemy. But proper pride and this poor lady had never had much acquaintance together. A disposition naturally simple and demanding protection, a long course of poverty and humility, of daily privations and hard words, of kind offices and no returns, had been her lot ever since womanhood almost, or since her luckless marriage with George Osborne. I must own that without much repining, on the contrary with something akin to gratitude, Amelia took the crumbs that her father-in-law let drop now and then, and with them fed her own parent. Directly she understood it to be her duty, it was this young woman's nature (ladies, she is but thirty still, and we choose to call her a young woman even at that age)—it was, I say, her nature to sacrifice herself and to fling all that she had at the feet of the beloved object. During what long thankless nights had she worked out her fingers for little Georgy while at home with her!

What buffets, scorns, privations, poverties had she endured for father and mother! And in the midst of all these solitary resignations and unseen sacrifices, she did not respect herself any more than the world respected her; but I believe thought in her heart that she was a poor-spirited despicable little creature, whose luck in life was only too good for her merits. Her life, begun not unprosperously, had come down to this—to a mean prison and a long, ignoble bondage. Little George visited her captivity sometimes, and consoled it with feeble gleams of encouragement. Russell Square was the boundary of her prison. She might walk thither occasionally, but was always back to sleep in her cell at night, to perform cheerless duties, to watch by thankless sickbeds, to suffer the harassment and tyranny of querulous disappointed old age.

They buried Amelia's mother in the churchyard at Brompton, upon just such a rainy, dark day as Amelia recollected when first she had been there to marry George. Her little boy sat by her side in pompous new sables. She remembered the old pew woman and clerk. Her thoughts were away in other times as the parson read. But that she held George's hand in her own, perhaps she would have like to change places with—— Then, as usual, she felt ashamed of her selfish thoughts, and prayed inwardly to be strengthened to do her duty.

So she determined with all her might and strength to try and make her old father happy. She slaved, toiled, patched, and mended, sang and played backgammon, read out the newspaper, cooked dishes for old Sedley, walked him out sedulously into Kensington Gardens or the Brompton lanes, listened to his stories with untiring smiles and affectionate hypocrisy, or sat musing by his side and communing with her own thoughts and reminiscences as the old man, feeble and querulous, sunned himself on the garden benches and prattled about his wrongs and sorrows. What sad, unsatisfactory thoughts those of the widow were! The children running up and down the slopes and broad paths in the gardens reminded her of George who was taken from her—the first George was taken from her. Her selfish, guilty love in both instances had been bitterly chastised. She strove to think it was right that she should be so punished. She was such a miserable wicked sinner. She was quite alone in the world.

Old Sedley grew very fond of his daughter after his wife's death; and Amelia had her consolation in doing her duty by the old man. But we are not going to leave these two people long in such a low and ungenteel station of life. Better days, as far as worldly prosperity went, were in store for both. Perhaps the ingenious reader has guessed who was the stout gentleman who called upon Georgy at his school in company with our old friend Major Dobbin. It was another old acquaintance returned to England, and at a time when his presence was likely to be of great comfort to his relatives there.

Major Dobbin, having easily succeeded in getting leave from his good-natured commandant to proceed to Madras and thence probably to Europe on urgent private affairs, never ceased traveling night and day until he reached his journey's end, and had directed his march with such celerity that he arrived at Madras in a high fever. His servants who accompanied him

brought him to the house of the friend with whom he had resolved to stay until his departure for Europe in a state of delirium, and it was thought for many many many days that he would never travel farther than the burying ground of the Church of St. George's, where the troops should fire a salvo over his grave and where many a gallant officer lies far away from his home.

Here, as the poor fellow lay tossing in his fever, the people who watched him might have heard him raving about Amelia. The idea that he should never see her again depressed him in his lucid hours. He thought his last day was come, and he made his solemn preparations for departure, setting his affairs in this world in order and leaving the little property of which he was possessed to those whom he most desired to benefit. The friend in whose house he was located witnessed his testament. He desired to be buried with a little brown-hair chain which he wore round his neck, and which, if the truth must be known, he had got from Amelia's maid at Brussels when the young widow's hair was cut off during the fever which prostrated her after the death of George Osborne on the plateau at Mount Saint John.

He recovered, rallied, relapsed again, having undergone such a process of bloodletting and calomel as showed the strength of his original constitution. He was almost a skeleton when they put him on board the *Ramchunder* East Indiaman, Captain Bragg, from Calcutta, touching at Madras, and so weak and prostrate that his friend who had tended him through his illness prophesied that the honest Major would never survive the voyage, and that he would pass some morning, shrouded in flag and hammock, over the ship's side and carrying down to the sea with him the relic that he wore at his heart. But whether it was the sea air or the hope which sprung up in him afresh, from the day that the ship spread her canvas and stood out of the roads toward *home*, our friend began to amend, and he was quite well (though as gaunt as a greyhound) before they reached the Cape. "Kirk will be disappointed of his majority this time," he said, with a smile. "He will expect to find himself gazetted by the time the regiment reaches home." For it must be premised that while the Major was lying ill at Madras, having made such prodigious haste to go thither, the gallant —th, which had passed many years abroad, which after its return from the West Indies had been balked of its stay at home by the Waterloo campaign and had been ordered from Flanders to India, had received orders home, and the Major might have accompanied his comrades had he chosen to wait for their arrival at Madras.

Perhaps he was not inclined to put himself, in his exhausted state, again under the guardianship of Glorvina. "I think Miss O'Dowd would have done for me," he said laughingly to a fellow passenger, "if we had had her on board. And when she had sunk me, she would have fallen upon you, depend upon it, and carried you in as a prize to Southampton, Jos, my boy."

For indeed it was no other than our stout friend who was also a passenger on board the *Ramchunder*. He had passed ten years in Bengal. Constant dinners, tiffins, pale ale and claret, the prodigious labor of cutcherry, and the refreshment of brandy pawnee which he was forced to take there had their effect upon Waterloo Sedley. A voyage to Europe was pronounced necessary

for him, and having served his full time in India, and had fine appointments which had enabled him to lay by a considerable sum of money, he was free to come home and stay with a good pension, or to return and resume that rank in his service to which his seniority and his vast talents entitled him.

He was rather thinner than when we last saw him, but had gained in majesty and solemnity of demeanor. He had resumed the mustaches to which his services at Waterloo entitled him, and swaggered about on deck in a magnificent velvet cap with a gold band and a profuse ornamentation of pins and jewelry about his person. He took breakfast in his cabin, and dressed as solemnly to appear on the quarterdeck as if he was going to turn out for Bond Street, or the course at Calcutta. He brought a native servant with him, who was his valet and pipe bearer, and who wore the Sedley crest in silver on his turban.

Many and many a night as the ship was cutting through the roaring, dark sea, the moon and stars shining overhead and the bell singing out the watch, Mr. Sedley and the Major would sit on the quarterdeck of the vessel talking about home as the Major smoked his cheroot and the civilian puffed at the hookah which his servant prepared for him.

In these conversations it was wonderful with what perseverance and ingenuity Major Dobbin would manage to bring the talk round to the subject of Amelia and her little boy. Jos, a little testy about his father's misfortunes and unceremonious applications to him, was soothed down by the Major, who pointed out the elder's ill fortunes and old age. He would not perhaps like to live with the old couple, whose ways and hours might not agree with those of a younger man accustomed to different society (Jos bowed at this compliment); but the Major pointed out how advantageous it would be for Jos Sedley to have a house of his own in London, and not a mere bachelor's establishment as before; how his sister Amelia would be the very person to preside over it; how elegant, how gentle she was, and of what refined good manners. He recounted stories of the success which Mrs. George Osborne had had in former days at Brussels and in London, where she was much admired by people of very great fashion, and he then hinted how becoming it would be for Jos to send Georgy to a good school and make a man of him, for his mother and her parents would be sure to spoil him. In a word, this artful Major made the civilian promise to take charge of Amelia and her unprotected child. He did not know as yet what events had happened in the little Sedley family, and how death had removed the mother and riches had carried off George from Amelia. But the fact is that every day and always this love-smitten and middle-aged gentleman was thinking about Mrs. Osborne, and his whole heart was bent upon doing her good. He coaxed, wheedled, cajoled, and complimented Jos Sedley with a perseverance and cordiality of which he was not aware himself, very likely.

The truth is, when Major Dobbin came on board the *Ramchunder*, very sick, and for the three days she lay in the Madras roads, he did not begin to rally, nor did even the appearance and recognition of his old acquaintance Mr. Sedley on board much cheer him until after a conversation which they

had one day as the Major was laid languidly on the deck. He said then he thought he was doomed, he had left a little something to his godson in his will, and he trusted Mrs. Osborne would remember him kindly, and be happy in the marriage she was about to make. "Married? Not the least," Jos answered. He had heard from her. She made no mention of the marriage; and by the way, it was curious, she wrote to say that Major Dobbin was going to be married, and hoped that *he* would be happy. What were the dates of Sedley's letters from Europe? The civilian fetched them. They were two months later than the Major's, and the ship's surgeon congratulated himself upon the treatment adopted by him toward his new patient, who had been consigned to shipboard by the Madras practitioner with very small hopes indeed; for from that day, the very day that he changed the draught, Major Dobbin began to mend. And thus it was that deserving officer, Captain Kirk, was disappointed of his majority.

After they passed St. Helena, Major Dobbin's gaiety and strength was such as to astonish all his fellow passengers. He larked with the midshipmen, played singlestick with the mates, ran up the shrouds like a boy, sang a comic song one night to the amusement of the whole party assembled over their grog after supper, and rendered himself so gay, lively, and amiable that even Captain Bragg, who thought there was nothing in his passenger and considered he was a poor-spirited feller at first, was constrained to own that the Major was a reserved but well-informed and meritorious officer. "He ain't got distangy manners, dammy," Bragg observed to his first mate. "He wouldn't do at Government House, Roper, where his lordship and Lady William was as kind to me, and shook hands with me before the whole company, and asking me at dinner to take beer with him, before the Commander in Chief himself. He ain't got manners, but there's something about him——" And thus Captain Bragg showed that he possessed discrimination as a man as well as ability as a commander.

But a calm taking place when the *Ramchunder* was within ten days' sail of England, Dobbin became so impatient and ill-humored as to surprise those comrades who had before admired his vivacity and good temper. He did not recover until the breeze sprang up again, and was in a highly excited state when the pilot came on board. Good God, how his heart beat as the two friendly spires of Southampton came in sight!

CHAPTER LVII

Our Major had rendered himself so popular on board the *Ramchunder* that when he and Mr. Sedley descended into the welcome shore boat which was to take them from the ship, the whole crew, men and officers, the great Captain Bragg himself leading off, gave three cheers for Major Dobbin, who blushed very much and ducked his head in token of thanks. Jos, who very likely thought the cheers were for himself, took off his gold-laced cap and

waved it majestically to his friends, and they were pulled to shore and landed with great dignity at the pier, whence they proceeded to the Royal George Hotel.

Although the sight of that magnificent round of beef and the silver tankard suggestive of real British home-brewed ale and porter, which perennially greet the eyes of the traveler returning from foreign parts who enters the coffee-room of the George, are so invigorating and delightful that a man entering such a comfortable, snug, homely English inn might well like to stop some days there, yet Dobbin began to talk about a post chaise instantly, and was no sooner at Southampton than he wished to be on the road to London. Jos, however, would not hear of moving that evening. Why was he to pass a night in a post chaise instead of a great large undulating downy feather bed which was there ready to replace the horrid little narrow crib in which the portly Bengal gentleman had been confined during the voyage? He could not think of moving till his baggage was cleared, or of traveling until he could do so with his chillum. So the Major was forced to wait overnight, and dispatched a letter to his family announcing his arrival, entreating from Jos a promise to write to his own friends. Jos promised, but didn't keep his promise.

Major Dobbin made his appearance the next morning very neatly shaved and dressed, according to his wont. Indeed, it was so early in the morning that nobody was up in the house except that wonderful Boots of an inn, who never seems to want sleep, and the Major could hear the snores of the various inmates of the house roaring through the corridors as he creaked about in those dim passages. Then Jos's native servant arose and began to get ready his master's ponderous dressing apparatus and prepare his hookah; then the maidservants got up, and meeting the dark man in the passages, shrieked and mistook him for the Devil. He and Dobbin stumbled over their pails in the passages as they were scouring the decks of the Royal George. When the first unshorn waiter appeared and unbarred the door of the inn, the Major thought that the time for departure was arrived, and ordered a post chaise to be fetched instantly, that they might set off.

He then directed his steps to Mr. Sedley's room and opened the curtains of the great large family bed wherein Mr. Jos was snoring. "Come, up, Sedley!" the Major said. "It's time to be off, the chaise will be at the door in half an hour."

Jos growled from under the counterpane to know what the time was, but when he at last extorted from the blushing Major (who never told fibs, however they might be to his advantage) what was the real hour of the morning, he broke out into a volley of bad language which we will not repeat here, but by which he gave Dobbin to understand that he would jeopardy his soul if he got up at that moment, that the Major might go and be hanged, that he would not travel with Dobbin, and that it was most unkind and ungentlemanlike to disturb a man out of his sleep in that way. On which the discomfited Major was obliged to retreat, leaving Jos to resume his interrupted slumbers.

The chaise came up presently, and the Major would wait no longer. If he

had been an English nobleman traveling on a pleasure tour, or a newspaper courier bearing dispatches, he could not have traveled more quickly. The post-boys wondered at the fees he flung among them. How happy and green the country looked as the chaise whirled rapidly from milestone to milestone—through neat country towns where landlords came out to welcome him with smiles and bows; by pretty roadside inns, where the signs hung on the elms and horses and wagoners were drinking under the checkered shadow of the trees; by old halls and parks, rustic hamlets clustered round ancient gray churches; and through the charming friendly English landscape. Is there any in the world like it? To a traveler returning home it looks so kind—it seems to shake hands with you as you pass through it. Well, Major Dobbin passed through all this from Southampton to London, and without noting much beyond the milestones along the road. You see he was so eager to see his parents at Camberwell.

He grudged the time lost between Piccadilly and his old haunt at the Slaughters', whither he drove faithfully. Long years had passed since he saw it last, since he and George, as young men, had enjoyed many a feast and held many a revel there. He had passed into the stage of old-fellowhood. His hair was grizzled, and many a passion and feeling of his youth had grown gray in that interval. There, however, stood the old waiter at the door, in the same greasy black suit, with the same double chin and flaccid face, with the same huge bunch of seals at his fob, rattling his money in his pockets as before, and receiving the Major as if he had gone away only a week ago. "Put the Major's things in twenty-three, that's his room," John said, exhibiting not the least surprise. "Roast fowl for your dinner, I suppose. You ain't got married? They said you was married. Like any warm water? What do you come in a chay for—ain't the coach good enough?" And with this the faithful waiter, who knew and remembered every officer who used the house, and with whom ten years were but as yesterday, led the way up to Dobbin's old room, where stood the neat moreen bed, and the shabby carpet, a thought more dingy, and all the old black furniture covered with chintz, just as the Major recollected them in his youth.

He remembered George pacing up and down the room and biting his nails and swearing that the governor must come round, and that if he didn't, he didn't care a straw, on the day before he was married. He could fancy him walking in, banging the door of Dobbin's room, and his own hard by—

"You ain't got young," John said, calmly surveying his friend of former days.

Dobbin laughed. "Ten years and a fever don't make a man young, John," he said. "It's you that are always young.—No, you are always old."

"What became of Captain Osborne's widow?" John said. "Fine young fellow that. Lord, how he used to spend his money! He never came back after that day he was married from here. He owes me three pounds at this minute. Look here, I have it in my book. 'April 10, 1815, Captain Osborne: £3.' I wonder whether his father would pay me." And so saying, John of the Slaughters' pulled out the very morocco pocketbook in which he had noted

his loan to the Captain upon a greasy faded page still extant, with many other scrawled memoranda regarding the bygone frequenters of the house.

Having inducted his customer into the room, John retired with perfect calmness, and Major Dobbin, not without a blush and a grin at his own absurdity, chose out of his kit the very smartest and most becoming civil costume he possessed, and laughed at his own tanned face and gray hair as he surveyed them in the dreary little toilet glass on the dressing table.

"I'm glad old John didn't forget me," he thought. "She'll know me too, I hope." And he sallied out of the inn, bending his steps once more in the direction of Brompton.

Every minute incident of his last meeting with Amelia was present to the constant man's mind as he walked toward her house. The arch and the Achilles statue were up since he had last been in Piccadilly; a hundred changes had occurred which his eye and mind vaguely noted. He began to tremble as he walked up the lane from Brompton, that well-remembered lane leading to the street where she lived. Was she going to be married or not? If he were to meet her with the little boy—Good God, what should he do? He saw a woman coming to him with a child of five years old—was that she? He began to shake at the mere possibility. When he came up to the row of houses at last where she lived, and to the gate, he caught hold of it and paused. He might have heard the thumping of his own heart. "May God Almighty bless her, whatever has happened," he thought to himself. "Pshaw! She may be gone from here," he said, and went in through the gate.

The window of the parlor which she used to occupy was open, and there were no inmates in the room. The Major thought he recognized the piano, though, with the picture over it as it used to be in former days, and his perturbations were renewed. Mr. Clapp's brass plate was still on the door, at the knocker of which Dobbin performed a summons.

A buxom-looking lass of sixteen with bright eyes and purple cheeks came to answer the knock and looked hard at the Major as he leaned back against the little porch.

He was as pale as a ghost, and could hardly falter out the words—"Does Mrs. Osborne live here?"

She looked him hard in the face for a moment, and then turning white too, said, "Lord bless me—it's Major Dobbin." She held out both her hands shaking. "Don't you remember me?" she said. "I used to call you Major Sugarplums." On which, and I believe it was for the first time that he ever so conducted himself in his life, the Major took the girl in his arms and kissed her. She began to laugh and cry hysterically, and calling out "Ma, Pa!" with all her voice, brought up those worthy people, who had already been surveying the Major from the casement of the ornamental kitchen, and were astonished to find their daughter in the little passage in the embrace of a great tall man in a blue frock coat and white-duck trousers.

"I'm an old friend," he said—not without blushing, though. "Don't you remember me, Mrs. Clapp, and those good cakes you used to make for tea? Don't you recollect me, Clapp? I'm George's godfather, and just come back

from India." A great shaking of hands ensued—Mrs. Clapp was greatly affected and delighted. She called upon Heaven to interpose a vast many times in that passage.

The landlord and landlady of the house led the worthy Major into the Sedleys' room (whereof he remembered every single article of furniture, from the old brass ornamented piano, once a natty little instrument, Stothard maker, to the screens and the alabaster miniature tombstone, in the midst of which ticked Mr. Sedley's gold watch) and there, as he sat down in the lodger's vacant armchair, the father, the mother, and the daughter, with a thousand ejaculatory breaks in the narrative, informed Major Dobbin of what we know already, but of particulars in Amelia's history of which he was not aware—namely, of Mrs. Sedley's death, of George's reconcilement with his grandfather Osborne, of the way in which the widow took on at leaving him, and of other particulars of her life. Twice or thrice he was going to ask about the marriage question, but his heart failed him. He did not care to lay it bare to these people. Finally, he was informed that Mrs. O was gone to walk with her pa in Kensington Gardens, whither she always went with the old gentleman (who was very weak and peevish now, and led her a sad life, though she behaved to him like an angel, to be sure) of a fine afternoon, after dinner.

"I'm very much pressed for time," the Major said, "and have business tonight of importance. I should like to see Mrs. Osborne, though. Suppose Miss Polly would come with me and show me the way."

Miss Polly was charmed and astonished at this proposal. She knew the way. She would show Major Dobbin. She had often been with Mr. Sedley when Mrs. O was gone—was gone Russell Square way, and knew the bench where he liked to sit. She bounced away to her apartment and appeared presently in her best bonnet and her mamma's yellow shawl and large pebble brooch, of which she assumed the loan in order to make herself a worthy companion for the Major.

That officer then, in his blue frock coat and buckskin gloves, gave the young lady his arm, and they walked away very gaily. He was glad to have a friend at hand for the scene which he dreaded somehow. He asked a thousand more questions from his companion about Amelia. His kind heart grieved to think that she should have had to part with her son. How did she bear it? Did she see him often? Was Mr. Sedley comfortable now in a worldly point of view? Polly answered all these questions of Major Sugar-plums to the very best of her power.

"There they are," said Miss Polly, and she felt him start back on her arm. She was confident at once of the whole business. She knew the story as well as if she had read it in one of her favorite novel books—*Fatherless Fanny*, or the *Scottish Chiefs*.

"Suppose you were to run on and tell her," the Major said. Polly ran forward, her yellow shawl streaming in the breeze.

Old Sedley was seated on a bench, his handkerchief placed over his knees, prattling away according to his wont with some old story about old times,

to which Amelia had listened and awarded a patient smile many a time before. She could of late think of her own affairs, and smile or make other marks of recognition of her father's stories, scarcely hearing a word of the old man's tales.

As Mary came bouncing along and Amelia caught sight of her, she started up from her bench. Her first thought was that something had happened to Georgy, but the sight of the messenger's eager and happy face dissipated that fear in the timorous mother's bosom.

"News! News!" cried the emissary of Major Dobbin. "He's come, he's come!"

"Who is come?" said Emmy, still thinking of her son.

"Look there," answered Miss Clapp, turning round and pointing, in which direction Amelia, looking, saw Dobbin's lean figure and long shadow stalking across the grass. Amelia started in her turn, blushed up, and of course began to cry. At all this simple little creature's fêtes the *grandes eaux* were accustomed to play.

He looked at her—oh, how fondly—as she came running toward him, her hands before her, ready to give them to him. She wasn't changed. She was a little pale, a little stouter in figure. Her eyes were the same, the kind, trustful eyes. There were scarce three lines of silver in her soft brown hair. She gave him both her hands as she looked up smiling through her tears into his honest homely face. He took the two little hands between his two and held them there. He was speechless for a moment. Why did he not take her in his arms, and swear that he would never leave her? She must have yielded, she could not but have obeyed him.

"I—I've another arrival to announce," he said, after a pause.

"Mrs. Dobbin?" Amelia said, making a movement back. Why didn't he speak?

"No," he said, letting her hands go. "Who has told you those lies? I mean your brother Jos came in the same ship with me, and is come home to make you all happy."

"Papa, Papa," Emmy cried out, "here is news! My brother is in England. He is come to take care of you. Here is Major Dobbin."

Mr. Sedley started up, shaking a great deal and gathering up his thoughts. Then he stepped forward and made an old-fashioned bow to the Major, whom he called Mr. Dobbin, and hoped his worthy father, Sir William, was quite well. He proposed to call upon Sir William, who had done him the honor of a visit a short time ago. Sir William had not called upon the old gentleman for eight years—it was that visit he was thinking of returning.

"He is very much shaken," Emmy whispered as Dobbin went up and cordially shook hands with the old man.

Although he had such particular business in London that evening, the Major consented to forgo it upon Mr. Sedley's invitation to him to come home and partake of tea. Amelia put her arm under that of her young friend with the yellow shawl and headed the party on their return homeward, so that Mr. Sedley fell to Dobbin's share. The old man walked very slowly, and told a

number of ancient histories about himself and his poor Bessy, his former prosperity, and his bankruptcy. His thoughts, as is usual with failing old men, were quite in former times. The present, with the exception of the one catastrophe which he felt, he knew little about. The Major was glad to let him talk on. His eyes were fixed upon the figure in front of him—the dear little figure always present to his imagination and in his prayers, and visiting his dreams wakeful or slumbering.

Amelia was very happy, smiling, and active all that evening, performing her duties as hostess of the little entertainment with the utmost grace and propriety, as Dobbin thought. His eyes followed her about as they sat in the twilight. How many a time had he longed for that moment, and thought of it her far away under hot winds and in weary marches, gentle and happy, kindly ministering to the wants of old age, and decorating poverty with sweet submission—as he saw her now. I do not say that his taste was the highest, or that it is the duty of great intellects to be content with a bread-and-butter paradise such as sufficed our simple old friend, but his desires were of this sort, whether for good or bad, and with Amelia to help him, he was as ready to drink as many cups of tea as Doctor Johnson.

Amelia, seeing this propensity, laughingly encouraged it, and looked exceedingly roguish as she administered to him cup after cup. It is true she did not know that the Major had had no dinner, and that the cloth was laid for him at Slaughters', and a plate laid thereon to mark that the table was retained, in that very box in which the Major and George had sat many a time carousing when she was a child just come home from Miss Pinkerton's school.

The first thing Mrs. Osborne showed the Major was Georgy's miniature, for which she ran upstairs on her arrival at home. It was not half handsome enough of course for the boy, but wasn't it noble of him to think of bringing it to his mother? While her papa was awake she did not talk much about Georgy. To hear about Mr. Osborne and Russell Square was not agreeable to the old man, who very likely was unconscious that he had been living for some months past mainly on the bounty of his richer rival, and lost his temper if allusion was made to the other.

Dobbin told him all, and a little more perhaps than all, that had happened on board the *Ramchunder*, and exaggerated Jos's benevolent dispositions toward his father and resolution to make him comfortable in his old days. The truth is that during the voyage the Major had impressed this duty most strongly upon his fellow passenger and extorted promises from him that he would take charge of his sister and her child. He soothed Jos's irritation with regard to the bills which the old gentleman had drawn upon him, gave a laughing account of his own sufferings on the same score and of the famous consignment of wine with which the old man had favored him; and brought Mr. Jos, who was by no means an ill-natured person when well pleased and moderately flattered, to a very good state of feeling regarding his relatives in Europe.

And in fine I am ashamed to say that the Major stretched the truth so far

as to tell old Mr. Sedley that it was mainly a desire to see his parent which brought Jos once more to Europe.

At his accustomed hour Mr. Sedley began to doze in his chair, and then it was Amelia's opportunity to commence her conversation, which she did with great eagerness. It related exclusively to Georgy. She did not talk at all about her own sufferings at breaking from him, for indeed this worthy woman, though she was half-killed by the separation from the child, yet thought it was very wicked of her to repine at losing him; but everything concerning him—his virtues, talents, and prospects—she poured out. She described his angelic beauty, narrated a hundred instances of his generosity and greatness of mind while living with her, how a Royal Duchess had stopped and admired him at Kensington Gardens, how splendidly he was cared for now and how he had a groom and a pony—what quickness and cleverness he had, and what a prodigiously well-read and delightful person the Reverend Lawrence Veal was, George's master.

"He knows *everything*," Amelia said. "He has the most delightful parties. You who are so learned yourself, and have read so much, and are so clever and accomplished—don't shake your head and say no—*he* always used to say you were—you will be charmed with Mr. Veal's parties. The last Tuesday in every month. He says there is no place in the bar or the senate that Georgy may not aspire to. Look here." And she went to the piano drawer and drew out a theme of Georgy's composition. This great effort of genius, which is still in the possession of George's mother, is as follows:

On Selfishness.—Of all the vices which degrade the human character, Selfishness is the most odious and contemptible. An undue love of Self leads to the most monstrous crimes, and occasions the greatest misfortunes both in *States and families.* As a selfish man will impoverish his family and often bring them to ruin, so a selfish king brings ruin on his people and often plunges them into war.

Example: The selfishness of Achilles, as remarked by the poet Homer, occasioned a thousand woes to the Greeks—(Hom. Il. A. 2.). The selfishness of the late Napoleon Bonaparte occasioned innumerable wars in Europe, and caused him to perish himself in a miserable island—that of Saint Helena in the Atlantic Ocean.

We see by these examples that we are not to consult our own interest and ambition, but that we are to consider the interests of others as well as our own.

ATHENE HOUSE, 24th April, 1827 GEORGE S. OSBORNE

"Think of him writing such a hand and quoting Greek, too, at his age," the delighted mother said. "Oh, William," she added, holding out her hand to the Major, "what a treasure Heaven has given me in that boy! He is the comfort of my life, and he is the image of—of him that's gone!"

"Ought I to be angry with her for being faithful to him?" William thought.

"Ought I to be jealous of my friend in the grave, or hurt that such a heart as Amelia's can love only once and forever? O George, George, how little you knew the prize you had, though!"

This sentiment passed rapidly through William's mind as he was holding Amelia's hand while the handkerchief was veiling her eyes.

"Dear friend," she said, pressing the hand which held hers, "how good, how kind you always have been to me! See! Papa is stirring. You will go and see Georgy tomorrow, won't you?"

"Not tomorrow," said poor old Dobbin. "I have business."

He did not like to own that he had not as yet been to his parents and his dear sister Anne—a remissness for which I am sure every well-regulated person will blame the Major. And presently he took his leave, leaving his address behind him for Jos, against the latter's arrival. And so the first day was over, and he had seen her.

When he got back to the Slaughters' the roast fowl was of course cold, in which condition he ate it for supper.

Knowing what early hours his family kept, and that it would be needless to disturb their slumbers at so late an hour, it is on record that Major Dobbin treated himself to half-price at the Haymarket Theater that evening, where let us hope he enjoyed himself.

CHAPTER LVIII

The Major's visit left old John Sedley in a great state of agitation and excitement. His daughter could not induce him to settle down to his customary occupations or amusements that night. He passed the evening fumbling among his boxes and desks, untying his papers with trembling hands, and sorting and arranging them against Jos's arrival. He had them in the greatest order—his tapes and his files, his receipts, and his letters with lawyers and correspondents; the documents relative to the wine project, the coal project, the patent sawmills and sawdust consolidation project, etc., etc.—All night, until a very late hour, he passed in the preparation of these documents, trembling about from one room to another, with a quivering candle and shaky hands.

"He shall find no irregularity about *me*, Emmy," the old gentleman said.

Emmy smiled. "I don't think Jos will care about seeing those papers, Papa," she said.

"You don't know anything about business, my dear," answered the sire, shaking his head with an important air. And it must be confessed that on this point Emmy was very ignorant, and that is a pity, some people are so knowing. All these twopenny documents arranged on a side table, old Sedley covered them carefully over with a clean bandanna handkerchief (one out of Major Dobbin's lot), and enjoined the maid and landlady of the house, in the most solemn way, not to disturb those papers, which were arranged for the arrival of Mr. Joseph Sedley the next morning, "Mr. Joseph Sedley of the Honorable East India Company's Bengal Civil Service."

Amelia found him up very early the next morning, more eager, more hectic, and more shaky than ever. "I didn't sleep much, Emmy, my dear," he said. "I was thinking of my poor Bessy. I wish she was alive, to ride in Jos's carriage once again. She kept her own, and became it very well." And his eyes filled with tears, which trickled down his furrowed face. Amelia wiped them away, and smilingly kissed him, and tied the old man's neckcloth in a smart bow and put his brooch into his best shirt frill, in which, in his Sunday suit of mourning, he sat from six o'clock in the morning awaiting the arrival of his son.

There are some splendid tailor shops in the High Street of Southampton, in the fine plate-glass windows of which hang gorgeous waistcoats of all sorts, of silk and velvet and gold and crimson, and pictures of the last new fashions, in which those wonderful gentlemen with quizzing glasses, and holding onto little boys with the exceeding large eyes and curly hair, ogle ladies in riding habits prancing by the statue of Achilles at Apsley House. Jos, although provided with some of the most splendid vests that Calcutta could furnish, thought he could not go to town until he was supplied with one or two of these garments, and selected a crimson satin embroidered with gold butterflies and a black-and-red velvet tartan with white stripes and a rolling collar, with which, and a rich blue satin stock and a gold pin consisting of a five-barred gate with a horseman in pink enamel jumping over it, he thought he might make his entry into London with some dignity. For Jos's former shyness and blundering, blushing timidity had given way to a more candid and courageous self-assertion of his worth.

"I don't care about owning it," Waterloo Sedley would say to his friends, "I am a dressy man." And though rather uneasy if the ladies looked at him at the Government House balls, and though he blushed and turned away alarmed under their glances, it was chiefly from a dread lest they should make love to him that he avoided them, being averse to marriage altogther. But there was no such swell in Calcutta as Waterloo Sedley, I have heard say, and he had the handsomest turnout, gave the best bachelor dinners, and had the finest plate in the whole place.

To make these waistcoats for a man of his size and dignity took at least a day, part of which he employed in hiring a servant to wait upon him and his native, and in instructing the agent who cleared his baggage, his boxes, his books—which he never read—his chests of mangoes, chutney, and curry powders, his shawls for presents to people whom he didn't know as yet, and the rest of his *Persicos apparatus.*

At length he drove leisurely to London on the third day, and in the new waistcoat, the native with chattering teeth shuddering in a shawl on the box by the side of the new European servant, Jos puffing his pipe at intervals within and looking so majestic that the little boys cried Hooray, and many people thought he must be a Governor General. *He,* I promise, did not decline the obsequious invitation of the landlords to alight and refresh himself in the neat country towns. Having partaken of a copious breakfast, with fish and rice and hard eggs, at Southampton, he had so far rallied at Winchester

as to think a glass of sherry necessary. At Alton he stepped out of the carriage at his servant's request and imbibed some of the ale for which the place is famous. At Farnham he stopped to view the Bishop's Castle, and to partake of a light dinner of stewed eels, veal cutlets, and French beans, with a bottle of claret. He was cold over Bagshot Heath, where the native chattered more and more and Jos Sahib took some brandy and water. In fact, when he drove into town he was as full of wine, beer, meat, pickles, cherry brandy, and tobacco as the steward's cabin of a steam packet. It was evening when his carriage thundered up to the little door in Brompton, whither the affectionate fellow drove first and before hieing to the apartments secured for him by Mr. Dobbin at the Slaughters'.

All the faces in the street were in the windows. The little maidservant flew to the wicket gate, the Mesdames Clapp looked out from the casement of the ornamental kitchen, Emmy, in a great flutter, was in the passage among the hats and coats, and old Sedley in the parlor inside, shaking all over. Jos descended from the post chaise and down the creaking, swaying steps in awful state, supported by the new valet from Southampton and the shuddering native, whose brown face was now livid with cold and of the color of a turkey's gizzard. He created an immense sensation in the passage presently, where Mrs. and Miss Clapp, coming perhaps to listen at the parlor door, found Loll Jewab shaking upon the hall bench under the coats, moaning in a strange piteous way and showing his yellow eyeballs and white teeth.

For, you see, we have adroitly shut the door upon the meeting between Jos and the old father and the poor little gentle sister inside. The old man was very much affected, so of course was his daughter, nor was Jos without feeling. In that long absence of ten years, the most selfish will think about home and early ties. Distance sanctifies both. Long brooding over those lost pleasures exaggerates their charm and sweetness. Jos was unaffectedly glad to see and shake the hand of his father, between whom and himself there had been a coolness—glad to see his little sister, whom he remembered so pretty and smiling, and pained at the alteration which time, grief, and misfortune had made in the shattered old man. Emmy had come out to the door in her black clothes and whispered to him of her mother's death, and not to speak of it to their father. There was no need of this caution, for the elder Sedley himself began immediately to speak of the event, and prattled about it and wept over it plenteously.

The result of the interview must have been very satisfactory, for when Jos had reascended his post chaise, and had driven away to his hotel, Emmy embraced her father tenderly, appealing to him with an air of triumph, and asking the old man whether she did not always say that her brother had a good heart.

Indeed, Joseph Sedley, affected by the humble position in which he found his relations, and in the expansiveness and overflowing of heart occasioned by the first meeting, declared that they should never suffer want or discomfort any more, that he was at home for some time at any rate, during which his house and everything he had should be theirs, and that Amelia would look

very pretty at the head of his table—until she would accept one of her own.

She shook her head sadly, and had, as usual, recourse to the waterworks. She knew what he meant. She and her young confidante, Miss Mary, had talked over the matter most fully, the very night of the Major's visit. "Didn't you see how he shook all over when you asked if he was married, and he said, 'Who told you those lies?' Oh, ma'am," Polly said, "he never kept his eyes off you, and I'm sure he's grown gray athinking of you."

But Amelia, looking up at her bed, over which hung the portraits of her husband and son, told her young protégée never, never to speak on that subject again—that Major Dobbin had been her husband's dearest friend, and her own and George's most kind and affectionate guardian, and that she loved him as a brother, but that a woman who had been married to such an angel as that, and she pointed to the wall, could never think of any other union.

Not that Emmy, being made aware of the honest Major's passion, rebuffed him in any way, or felt displeased with him. Such an attachment from so true and loyal a gentleman could make no woman angry. Desdemona was not angry with Cassio, though there is very little doubt she saw the lieutenant's partiality for her. Why, Miranda was even very kind to Caliban, and we may be pretty sure for the same reason. Not that she would encourage him in the least—the poor uncouth monster—of course not. No more would Emmy by any means encourage her admirer the Major. She would give him that friendly regard which so much excellence and fidelity merited, she would treat him with perfect cordiality and frankness until he made his proposals, and *then* it would be time enough for her to speak and to put an end to hopes which never could be realized.

She slept, therefore, very soundly that evening after the conversation with Miss Polly, and was more than ordinarily happy, in spite of Jos's delaying. "I am glad he is not going to marry that Miss O'Dowd," she thought. "Colonel O'Dowd never could have a sister fit for such an accomplished man as Major William." Who was there among her little circle who would make him a good wife? Not Miss Binny, she was too old and ill-tempered. Miss Osborne?—Too old too. Little Polly was too young. Mrs. Osborne could not find anybody to suit the Major before she went to sleep.

However, when the postman made his appearance, the little party were put out of suspense by the receipt of a letter from Jos to his sister, who announced that he felt a little fatigued after his voyage and should not be able to move on that day, but that he would leave Southampton early the next morning and be with his father and mother at evening. Amelia, as she read out the letter to her father, paused over the latter word; her brother, it was clear, did not know what had happened in the family. Nor could he, for the fact is that though the Major rightly suspected that his traveling companion never would be got into motion in so short a space as twenty-four hours, and would find some excuse for delaying, yet Dobbin had not written to Jos to inform him of the calamity which had befallen the Sedley family, being occupied in talking with Amelia until long after post hour.

The same morning brought Major Dobbin a letter to the Slaughters' Coffee-house from his friend at Southampton, begging dear Dob to excuse Jos for being in a rage when awakened the day before (he had a confounded head-ache, and was just in his first sleep) and entreating Dob to engage comfortable rooms at the Slaughters' for Mr. Sedley and his servants. The Major had become necessary to Jos during the voyage. He was attached to him and hung upon him.

Shortly after Jos's first appearance at Brompton, a dismal scene indeed took place at that humble cottage at which the Sedleys had passed the last ten years of their life. Jos's carriage (the temporary one, not the chariot under construction) arrived one day and carried off old Sedley and his daughter—to return no more. The tears that were shed by the landlady and the landlady's daughter at that event were as genuine tears of sorrow as any that have been outpoured in the course of this history. In their long acquaintanceship and intimacy they could not recall a harsh word that had been uttered by Amelia. She had been all sweetness and kindness, always thankful, always gentle, even when Mrs. Clapp lost her own temper and pressed for the rent. When the kind creature was going away for good and all, the landlady reproached herself bitterly for ever having used a rough expression to her. How she wept as they stuck up with wafers on the window a paper notifying that the little rooms so long occupied were to let! They never would have such lodgers again, that was quite clear.

Major Dobbin was exceedingly pleased when as he was superintending the arrangements of Jos's new house, which the Major insisted should be very handsome and comfortable, the cart arrived from Brompton bringing the trunks and bandboxes of the emigrants from that village, and with them the old piano. Amelia would have it up in her sitting-room, a neat little apartment on the second floor adjoining her father's chamber, and where the old gentleman sat commonly of evenings.

When the men appeared then bearing this old music box and Amelia gave orders that it should be placed in the chamber aforesaid, Dobbin was quite elated. "I'm glad you've kept it," he said in a very sentimental manner. "I was afraid you didn't care about it."

"I value it more than anything I have in the world," said Amelia.

"*Do* you, Amelia?" cried the Major. The fact was, as he had bought it himself, though he never said anything about it, it never entered into his head to suppose that Emmy should think anybody else was the purchaser, and as a matter of course he fancied that she knew the gift came from him. "Do you, Amelia?" he said, and the question, the great question of all, was trembling on his lips when Emmy replied:

"Can I do otherwise?—Did not *he* give it to me?"

"I did not know," said poor old Dob, and his countenance fell.

Emmy did not note the circumstance at the time, nor take immediate heed of the dismal expression which honest Dobbin's countenance assumed, but she thought of it afterward. And then it struck her, with inexpressible pain and mortification too, that it was William who was the giver of the piano, and

not George, as she had fancied. It was not George's gift, the only one which she had received from her lover, as she thought—the thing she had cherished beyond all others, her dearest relic and prize. She had spoken to it about George, played his favorite airs upon it, sat for long evenings touching to the best of her simple art melancholy harmonies on the keys and weeping over them in silence. It was not George's relic. It was valueless now. The next time that old Sedley asked her to play, she said it was shockingly out of tune, that she had a headache, that she couldn't play.

Then, according to her custom, she rebuked herself for her pettishness and ingratitude, and determined to make a reparation to honest William for the slight she had not expressed to him but had felt for his piano. A few days afterward, as they were seated in the drawing-room, where Jos had fallen asleep with great comfort after dinner, Amelia said with rather a faltering voice to Major Dobbin:

"I have to beg your pardon for something."

"About what?" said he.

"About—about that little square piano. I never thanked you for it when you gave it me, many, many years ago, before I was married. I thought somebody else had given it. Thank you, William." She held out her hand, but the poor little woman's heart was bleeding, and as for her eyes, of course they were at their work.

But William could hold no more. "Amelia, Amelia," he said, "I did buy it for you. I loved you then as I do now. I must tell you. I think I loved you from the first minute that I saw you, when George brought me to your house to show me the Amelia he was engaged to. You were but a girl, in white, with large ringlets. You came down singing—do you remember?—and we went to Vauxhall. Since then I have thought of but one woman in the world, and that was you. I think there is no hour in the day for twelve years that I have not thought of you. I came to tell you this before I went to India, but you didn't care, and I hadn't the heart to speak. You did not care whether I stayed or went."

"I was very ungrateful," Amelia said.

"No, only indifferent," Dobbin continued desperately. "I have nothing to make a woman be otherwise. I know what you are feeling now. You are hurt in your heart at the discovery about the piano, and that it came from me and not from George. I forgot, or I should never have spoken of it so. It is for me to ask your pardon for being a fool for a moment and thinking that years of constancy and devotion might have pleaded with you."

"It is you who are cruel now," Amelia said with some spirit. "George is my husband, here and in Heaven. How could I love any other but him? I am his now as when you first saw me, dear William. It was he who told me how good and generous you were, and who taught me to love you as a brother. Have you not been everything to me and my boy? Our dearest, truest, kindest friend and protector? Had you come a few months sooner, perhaps you might have spared me that—that dreadful parting. Oh, it nearly killed me, William—but you didn't come, though I wished and prayed for you to come, and they

took him too away from me. Isn't he a noble boy, William? Be his friend still, and mine."—And here her voice broke and she hid her face on his shoulder.

The Major folded his arms round her, holding her to him as if she was a child, and kissed her head. "I will not change, dear Amelia," he said. "I ask for no more than your love. I think I would not have it otherwise. Only let me stay near you and see you often."

"Yes, often," Amelia said. And so William was at liberty to look and long, as the poor boy at school who has no money may sigh after the contents of the tart woman's tray.

CHAPTER LIX

Good fortune now begins to smile upon Amelia. We are glad to get her out of that low sphere in which she has been creeping hitherto and introduce her into a polite circle—not so grand and refined as that in which our other female friend, Mrs. Becky, has appeared, but still having no small pretensions to gentility and fashion. Jos's friends were all from the three Presidencies, and his new house was in the comfortable Anglo-Indian district of which Moira Place is the center. Jos's position in life was not grand enough to entitle him to a house in Moira Place, where none can live but retired Members of Council and partners of Indian firms. He engaged a comfortable house of a second- or third-rate order in Gillespie Street, purchasing the carpets, costly mirrors, and handsome and appropriate planned furniture.

It was a modest establishment. The butler was Jos's valet also, and never was more drunk than a butler in a small family should be who has a proper regard for his master's wine. Emmy was supplied with a maid grown on Sir William Dobbin's suburban estate, a good girl, whose kindness and humility disarmed Mrs. Osborne, who was at first terrified at the idea of having a servant to wait upon herself, who did not in the least know how to use one, and who always spoke to domestics with the most reverential politeness. But this maid was very useful in the family in dexterously tending old Mr. Sedley, who kept almost entirely to his own quarter of the house and never mixed in any of the gay doings which took place there.

Numbers of people came to see Mrs. Osborne. Lady Dobbin and daughters were delighted at her change of fortune, and waited upon her. Miss Osborne from Russell Square came in her grand chariot with the flaming hammercloth emblazoned with the Leeds arms. Jos was reported to be immensely rich. Old Osborne had no objection that Georgy should inherit his uncle's property as well as his own. "Damn it, we will make a man of the feller," he said, "and I'll see him in Parliament before I die. *You* may go and see his mother, Miss O, though I'll never set eyes on her." And Miss Osborne came. Emmy, you may be sure, was very glad to see her and so be brought nearer to George. That young fellow was allowed to come much more frequently than before to visit his mother. He dined once or twice a week in Gillespie Street, and bullied the servants and his relations there just as he did in Russell Square.

He was always respectful to Major Dobbin, however, and more modest in his demeanor when that gentleman was present. He was a clever lad, and afraid of the Major. George could not help admiring his friend's simplicity, his good humor, his various learning quietly imparted, his general love of truth and justice. He had met no such man as yet in the course of his experience, and he had an instinctive liking for a gentleman. He hung fondly by his godfather's side, and it was his delight to walk in the parks and hear Dobbin talk. William told George about his father, about India and Waterloo, about everything but himself. When George was more than usually pert and conceited, the Major made jokes at him, which Mrs. Osborne thought very cruel. One day, taking him to the play and the boy declining to go into the pit because it was vulgar, the Major took him to the boxes, left him there, and went down himself to the pit. He had not been seated there very long before he felt an arm thrust under his and a dandy little hand in a kid glove squeezing his arm. George had seen the absurdity of his ways and come down from the upper region. A tender laugh of benevolence lighted up old Dobbin's face and eyes as he looked at the repentant little prodigal. He loved the boy, as he did everything that belonged to Amelia. How charmed she was when she heard of this instance of George's goodness! Her eyes looked more kindly on Dobbin than they ever had done. She blushed, he thought, after looking at him so.

Georgy never tired of his praises of the Major to his mother. "I like him, Mamma, because he knows such lots of things, and he ain't like old Veal, who is always bragging and using such long words, don't you know? The chaps call him 'Longtail' at school. I gave him the name, ain't it capital? But Dob reads Latin like English and French and that, and when we go out together he tells me stories about my papa, and never about himself, though I heard Colonel Buckler at Grandpapa's say that he was one of the bravest officers in the army and had distinguished himself ever so much. Grandpapa was quite surprised, and said, '*That* feller! Why, I didn't think he could say boo to a goose!'—But *I* know he could, couldn't he, Mamma?"

Emmy laughed. She thought it was very likely the Major could do thus much.

If there was a sincere liking between George and the Major, it must be confessed that between the boy and his uncle no great love existed. George had got a way of blowing out his cheeks and putting his hands in his waistcoat pockets and saying, "God bless my soul, you don't say so," so exactly like the fashion of old Jos that it was impossible to refrain from laughter. The servants would explode at dinner if the lad, asking for something which wasn't at table, put on that countenance and used that favorite phrase. Even Dobbin would shoot out a sudden peal at the boy's mimicry. If George did not mimic his uncle to his face, it was only by Dobbin's rebukes and Amelia's terrified entreaties that the little scapegrace was induced to desist. And the worthy civilian, being haunted by a dim consciousness that the lad thought him an ass and was inclined to turn him into ridicule, used to be extremely timorous and of course doubly pompous and dignified in the presence of Master Georgy.

Joseph Sedley, then, led a life of dignified otiosity such as became a person of his eminence. His very first point, of course, was to became a member of the Oriental Club, where he spent his mornings in company of his brother Indians, where he dined, or whence he brought home men to dine.

Amelia had to receive and entertain these gentlemen and their ladies. From these she heard how soon Smith would be in Council; how many lacs Jones had brought home with him; how Thomson's house, in London, had refused the bills drawn by Thomson, Kibobjee, & Co., the Bombay house; and how it was thought the Calcutta house must go too.

Before long Emmy had a visiting book, and was driving about regularly in a carriage, calling upon Lady Bludyer, wife of Major-General Sir Roger Bludyer, K.C.B., Bengal Army; Lady Huff, wife of Sir G. Huff, Bombay ditto; Mrs. Pice, the lady of Pice the director, etc. We are not long in using ourselves to changes in life. The lady's maid and the chariot, the visiting book and the buttony page, became soon as familiar to Amelia as the humble routine of Brompton. She accommodated herself to one as to the other. If Fate had ordained that she should be a duchess, she would even have done that duty, too. She was voted in Jos's female society rather a pleasing young person—not much in her, but pleasing, and that sort of thing.

The men, as usual, liked her artless kindness and simple refined demeanor. The gallant young Indian dandies at home on furlough—immense dandies these, chained and mustached, driving in tearing cabs, the pillars of the theaters, living at West End hotels—nevertheless admired Mrs. Osborne, liked to bow to her carriage in the Park, and to be admitted to have the honor of paying her a morning visit. Swankey of the bodyguard himself, that dangerous youth, and the greatest buck of all the Indian army now on leave, was one day discovered by Major Dobbin tête-à-tête with Amelia, and describing the sport of pigsticking to her with great humor and eloquence.

Had the Major possessed a little more personal vanity, he would have been jealous of so dangerous a young buck as that fascinating Bengal Captain. But Dobbin was of too simple and generous a nature to have any doubts about Amelia. He was glad that the young men should pay her respect, and that others should admire her. Ever since her womanhood almost, had she not been persecuted and undervalued? It pleased him to see how kindness brought out her good qualities, and how her spirits gently rose with her prosperity. Any person who appreciated her paid a compliment to the Major's good judgment—that is, if a man may be said to have good judgment who is under the influence of love's delusion.

After Jos went to Court, which we may be sure he did as a loyal subject of his sovereign, he, who had always been a stanch loyalist and admirer of George IV, became such a tremendous Tory and pillar of the state that he was for having Amelia to go to the drawing-room too. He somehow had worked himself up to believe that he was implicated in the maintenance of the public welfare, and that the sovereign would not be happy unless Jos Sedley and his family appeared to rally round him at St. James's.

Emmy laughed. "Shall I wear the family diamonds, Jos?" she said.

"I wish you would let me buy you some," thought the Major. "I should like to see any that were too good for you."

CHAPTER LX

THERE came a day when the round of decorous pleasures and solemn gaieties in which Mr. Jos Sedley's family indulged was interrupted by an event which happens in most houses. As you ascend the staircase of your house toward the bedroom floors, you may have remarked a little arch in the wall right before you which at once gives light to the stair which leads from the second story to the third, and serves for another purpose of utility of which the undertaker's men can give you a notion. They rest the coffins upon that arch, or pass them through it, so as not to disturb in any unseemly manner the cold tenant slumbering within the black arch.

The period of mourning for Mrs. Sedley's death was only just concluded, and Jos scarcely had had time to cast off his black and appear in the splendid waistcoats which he loved, when it became evident to those about Mr. Sedley that another event was at hand, and that the old man was about to go seek for his wife in the dark land whither she had preceded him. "The state of my father's health," Jos Sedley solemnly remarked at the club, "prevents me from giving any *large* parties this season, but if you will come in quietly at half-past six, Chutney my boy, and take a homely dinner with one or two of the old set, I shall be always glad to see you." So Jos and his acquaintances dined and drank their claret among themselves in silence while the sands of life were running out in the old man's glass upstairs.

The old man clung to his daughter during this sickness. He would take his broths and medicines from scarcely any other hand. To tend him became almost the sole business of her life. Her bed was placed close by the door which opened into his chamber, and she was alive at the slightest noise or disturbance from the couch of the querulous invalid. Though, to do him justice, he lay awake many an hour, silent and without stirring, unwilling to awaken his kind and vigilant nurse.

He loved his daughter with more fondness now, perhaps, than ever he had done since the days of her childhood. In the discharge of gentle offices and kind filial duties, this simple creature shone most especially. "She walks into the room as silently as a sunbeam," Mr. Dobbin thought as he saw her passing in and out from her father's room, a cheerful sweetness lighting up her face as she moved to and fro, graceful and noiseless.

A secret feud of some years' standing was thus healed, and with a tacit reconciliation. In these last hours, and touched by her love and goodness, the old man forgot all his grief against her and wrongs which he and his wife had many a long night debated—how she had given up everything for her boy, how she was careless of her parents in their old age and misfortune and only thought of the child, how absurdly and foolishly, impiously indeed, she

took on when George was removed from her. Old Sedley forgot these charges as he was making up his last account, and did justice to the gentle and uncomplaining little martyr. One night when she stole into his room she found him awake, when the broken old man made his confession. "Oh, Emmy, I've been thinking we were very unkind and unjust to you," he said, and put out his cold and feeble hand to her. She knelt down and prayed by his bedside, as he did too, having still hold of her hand.

So there came one morning a sunrise when all the world got up and set about its various works and pleasures with the exception of old Joseph Sedley, who was not to fight with fortune or to hope or scheme any more, but to go and take up a quiet and utterly unknown residence in a churchyard at Brompton by the side of his old wife.

Major Dobbin, Jos, and Georgy followed his remains to the grave in a black cloth coach. Jos came on purpose from the Star and Garter at Richmond, whither he retreated after the deplorable event. He did not care to remain in the house with the—under the circumstances, you understand. But Emmy stayed and did her duty as usual. She was bowed down by no especial grief, and rather solemn than sorrowful. She prayed that her own end might be as calm and painless, and thought with trust and reverence of the words which she had heard from her father during his illness indicative of his faith, his resignation, and his future hope.

"You see," said old Osborne to George, "what comes of merit and industry, and judicious speculations, and that. Look at me and my banker's account. Look at your poor Grandfather Sedley, and his failure. And yet he was a better man than I was this day twenty years—a better man, I should say, by ten thousand pound."

Beyond these people and Mr. Clapp's family, who came over from Brompton to pay a visit of condolence, not a single soul alive ever cared a penny piece about old John Sedley, or remembered the existence of such a person.

When old Osborne first heard from his friend Colonel Buckler (as little Georgy has already informed us) how distinguished an officer Major Dobbin was, he exhibited a great deal of scornful incredulity, and expressed his surprise how ever such a feller as that should possess either brains or reputation. But he heard of the Major's fame from various members of his society. Sir William Dobbin had a great opinion of his son, and narrated many stories illustrative of the Major's learning, valor, and estimation in the world's opinion. Finally, his name appeared in the lists of one or two great parties of the nobility, and this circumstance had a prodigious effect upon the old aristocrat of Russell Square.

The Major's position as guardian to Georgy, whose possession had been ceded to his grandfather, rendered some meeting between the two gentlemen inevitable, and it was in one of these that old Osborne, a keen man of business, looking into the Major's accounts with his ward and the boy's mother, got a hint which staggered him very much, and at once pained and pleased him—

that it was out of William Dobbin's own pocket that a part of the fund had been supplied upon which the poor widow and the child had subsisted.

When pressed upon the point, Dobbin, who could not tell lies, blushed and stammered a good deal, and finally confessed. "The marriage," he said (at which his interlocutor's face grew dark), "was very much my doing. I thought my poor friend had gone so far that retreat from his engagement would have been dishonor to him and death to Mrs. Osborne, and I could do no less when she was left without resources than give what money I could spare to maintain her."

"Major D," Mr. Osborne said, looking hard at him and turning very red, too, "you did me a great injury, but give me leave to tell you, sir, you are an honest feller. There's my hand, sir, though I little thought that my flesh and blood was living on you." And the pair shook hands, with great confusion on Major Dobbin's part, thus found out in his act of charitable hypocrisy.

He strove to soften the old man and reconcile him toward his son's memory. "He was such a noble fellow," he said, "that all of us loved him, and would have done anything for him. I, as a young man in those days, was flattered beyond measure by his preference for me, and was more pleased to be seen in his company than in that of the Commander in Chief. I never saw his equal for pluck and daring, and all the qualities of a soldier." And Dobbin told the old father as many stories as he could remember regarding the gallantry and achievements of his son. "And Georgy is so like him," the Major added.

"He's so like him that he makes me tremble sometimes," the grandfather said.

On one or two evenings the Major came to dine with Mr. Osborne (it was during the time of the sickness of Mr. Sedley), and as the two sat together in the evening after dinner all their talk was about the departed hero. The father boasted about him according to his wont, glorifying himself in recounting his son's feats and gallantry, but his mood was at any rate better and more charitable than that in which he had been disposed until now to regard the poor fellow; and the Christian heart of the kind Major was pleased at these symptoms of returning peace and goodwill. On the second evening old Osborne called Dobbin William, just as he used to do at the time when Dobbin and George were boys together, and the honest gentleman was pleased by that mark of reconciliation.

On the next day at breakfast when Miss Osborne, with the asperity of her age and character, ventured to make some remark reflecting slightingly upon the Major's appearance or behavior, the master of the house interrupted her. "You'd have been glad enough to git him for yourself, Miss O. But them grapes are sour. Ha! ha! Major William is a fine feller."

"That he is, Grandpapa," said Georgy approvingly, and going up close to the old gentleman, he took a hold of his large gray whiskers and laughed in his face good-humoredly and kissed him. And he told the story at night to his mother, who fully agreed with the boy. "Indeed he is," she said. "Your dear father always said so. He is one of the best and most upright of men." Dobbin

happened to drop in very soon after this conversation, which made Amelia blush, perhaps, and the young scapegrace increased the confusion by telling Dobbin the other part of the story. "I say, Dob," he said, "there's such an uncommon nice girl wants to marry you. She's plenty of tin, she wears a front, and she scolds the servants from morning till night." "Who is it?" asked Dobbin.

"It's Aunt O," the boy answered. "Grandpapa said so. And I say, Dob, how prime it would be to have you for my uncle."

That old Osborne's mind was changing was pretty clear. He asked George about his uncle sometimes, and laughed at the boy's imitation of the way in which Jos said "God bless my soul," and gobbled his soup. Then he said: "It is not respectful, sir, of you younkers to be imitating of your relations. Miss O, when you go out a driving today, leave my card upon Mr. Sedley, do you hear? There's no quarrel betwigst me and him anyhow."

The card was returned, and Jos and the Major were asked to dinner—to a dinner the most splendid and stupid that perhaps ever Mr. Osborne gave. Every inch of the family plate was exhibited, and the best company was asked. Mr. Sedley took down Miss O to dinner and she was very gracious to him, whereas she hardly spoke to the Major, who sat apart from her and by the side of Mr. Osborne, very timid. Jos said, with great solemnity, it was the best turtle soup he had ever tasted in his life, and asked Mr. Osborne where he got his Madeira.

"It is some of Sedley's wine," whispered the butler to his master.

"I've had it a long time, and paid a good figure for it, too," Mr. Osborne said aloud to his guest, and then whispered to his right-hand neighbor how he had got it "at the old chap's sale."

More than once he asked the Major about—about Mrs. George Osborne—a theme on which the Major could be very eloquent when he chose. He told Mr. Osborne of her sufferings—of her passionate attachment to her husband, whose memory she worshiped still, of the tender and dutiful manner in which she had supported her parents, and given up her boy when it seemed to her her duty to do so. "You don't know what she endured, sir," said honest Dobbin, with a tremor in his voice, "and I hope and trust you will be reconciled to her. If she took your son away from you, she gave hers to you, and however much you loved your George, depend on it, she loved hers ten times more."

"By God, you are a good feller, sir," was all Mr. Osborne said. It had never struck him that the widow would feel any pain at parting from the boy, or that his having a fine fortune could grieve her. A reconciliation was announced as speedy and inevitable, and Amelia's heart already began to beat at the notion of the awful meeting with George's father.

It was never, however, destined to take place. Old Sedley's lingering illness and death supervened, after which a meeting was for some time impossible. That catastrophe and other events may have worked upon Mr. Osborne. He was much shaken of late, and aged, and his mind was working inwardly. He had sent for his lawyers, and probably changed something in his will. The medical

man who looked in pronounced him shaky, agitated, and talked of a little blood and the seaside, but he took neither of these remedies.

One day when he should have come down to breakfast, his servant, missing him, went into his dressing room and found him lying at the foot of the dressing table in a fit. Miss Osborne was apprised, the doctors were sent for, Georgy stopped away from school, the bleeders and cuppers came. Osborne partially regained cognizance, but never could speak again, though he tried dreadfully once or twice, and in four days he died, and all the shutters were shut toward the garden in Russell Square. Bullock rushed from the city in a hurry. How much money had he left to that boy?—Not half, surely? Surely share and share alike between the three? It was an agitating moment.

What was it that poor old man tried once or twice in vain to say? I hope it was that he wanted to see Amelia and be reconciled before he left the world to the dear and faithful wife of his son. It was most likely that, for his will showed that the hatred which he had so long cherished had gone out of his heart.

They found in the pockets of his dressing gown the letter with the great red seal which George had written him from Waterloo. He had looked at the other papers, too, relative to his son, for the key of the box in which he kept them was also in his pocket, and it was found the seals and envelopes had been broken.

When the will was opened, it was found that half the property was left to George, and the remainder between the two sisters, Mr. Bullock to continue for their joint benefit the affairs of the commercial house or to go out, as he thought fit. An annuity of five hundred pounds, chargeable on George's property, was left to his mother, "the widow of my beloved son, George Osborne," who was to resume the guardianship of the boy.

"Major William Dobbin, my beloved son's friend," was appointed executor, "and as out of his kindness and bounty, and with his own private funds, he maintained my grandson and my son's widow when they were otherwise without means of support, I hereby thank him heartily for his love and regard for them, and beseech him to accept such a sum as may be sufficient to purchase his commission as a Lieutenant Colonel, or to be disposed of in any way he may think fit."

When Amelia heard that her father-in-law was reconciled to her, her heart melted, and she was grateful for the fortune left to her. But when she heard how Georgy was restored to her, and knew how and by whom, and how it was William's bounty that supported her in poverty, how it was William who gave her her husband and her son—oh, then she sank on her knees and prayed for blessings on that constant and kind heart. She bowed down and humbled herself, and kissed the feet, as it were, of that beautiful and generous affection.

And gratitude was all that she had to pay back for such admirable devotion and benefits—only gratitude! If she thought of any other return, the image of George stood up out of the grave and said, "You are mine, and mine only, now and forever."

William knew her feelings. Had he not passed his whole life in divining them?

When the nature of Mr. Osborne's will became known to the world, it was edifying to remark how Mrs. George Osborne rose in the estimation of the people forming her circle of acquaintance. The servants of Jos's establishment, who used to question her humble orders and say they would "ask master" whether or not they could obey, never thought now of that sort of appeal. The cook forgot to sneer at her shabby old gowns, the others no longer grumbled at the sound of her bell or delayed to answer that summons. The coachman, who grumbled that his 'osses should be brought out and his carriage made into a hospital for that old feller and Mrs. O, drove her with the utmost alacrity now, and trembling lest he should be superseded by Mr. Osborne's coachman, asked what "them there Russell Square coachmen knew about town," and whether *they* "was fit to sit on a box before a lady." Jos's friends, male and female, suddenly became interested about Emmy, and cards of condolence multiplied on her hall table. Jos himself, who had looked on her as a good-natured harmless pauper to whom it was his duty to give victuals and shelter, paid her and the rich little boy, his nephew, the greatest respect—was anxious that she should have change and amusement after her troubles and trials, "poor dear girl," and began to appear at the breakfast table, and most particularly to ask how she would like to dispose of the day.

In her capacity of guardian to Georgy, she, with the consent of the Major, her fellow trustee, begged Miss Osborne to live in the Russell Square house as long as ever she chose to dwell there; but that lady, with thanks, declared that she never could think of remaining alone in that melancholy mansion and departed in deep mourning to Cheltenham, with a couple of her old domestics. The rest were liberally paid and dismissed, the faithful old butler, whom Mrs. Osborne proposed to retain, resigning and preferring to invest his savings in a public house, where, let us hope, he was not unprosperous. Miss Osborne not choosing to live in Russell Square, Mrs. Osborne also, after consultation, declined to occupy the gloomy old mansion there. The house was dismantled, the rich furniture and effects, the awful chandeliers and dreary blank mirrors, packed away and hidden. The rich rosewood drawing-room suite was muffled in straw, the carpets were rolled up and corded, the small select library of well-bound books was stowed into two wine chests, and the whole paraphernalia rolled away in several enormous vans to the Pantechnicon, where they were to lie until George's majority. And the great heavy dark plate chests went off to Messrs. Stumpy & Rowdy, to lie in the cellars of those eminent bankers until the same period should arrive.

One day Emmy, with George in her hand and clad in deep sables, went to visit the deserted mansion which she had not entered since she was a girl. The place in front was littered with straw where the vans had been laden and rolled off. They went into the great blank rooms, the walls of which bore the marks where the pictures and mirrors had hung. Then they went up the great blank stone staircases into the upper rooms, into that where Grandpapa died, as George said in a whisper, and then higher still into

George's own room. They boy was still clinging by her side, but she thought of another besides him. She knew that it had been his father's room as well as his own.

She went up to one of the open windows (one of those at which she used to gaze with a sick heart when the child was first taken from her), and thence as she looked out she could see over the trees of Russell Square the old house in which she herself was born, and where she had passed so many happy days of sacred youth. They all came back to her—the pleasant holidays, the kind faces, the careless, joyful past times, and the long pains and trials that had since cast her down. She thought of these and of the man who had been her constant protector, her good genius, her sole benefactor, her tender and generous friend.

"Look here, Mother," said Georgy. "Here's a G. O. scratched on the glass with a diamond. I never saw it before, *I* never did it."

"It was your father's room long before you were born, George," she said, and she blushed as she kissed the boy.

She was very silent as they drove back to Richmond, where they had taken a temporary house, and where of course there was a room for Major Dobbin too, who rode over frequently, having much business to transact on behalf of his little ward.

George at this time was removed from Mr. Veal's on an unlimited holiday, and that gentleman was engaged to prepare an inscription for a fine marble slab to be placed up in the Foundling under the monument of Captain George Osborne.

CHAPTER LXI

A FEW weeks had passed when on one fine morning, Parliament being over, the summer advanced, and all the good company in London about to quit that city for their annual tour in search of pleasure or health, the *Batavier* steamboat left the Tower stairs laden with a goodly company of English fugitives. The quarterdeck awnings were up, and the benches and gangways crowded with scores of rosy children, bustling nursemaids, ladies in the prettiest pink bonnets and summer dresses, gentlemen in traveling caps and linen jackets whose mustachios had just begun to sprout for the ensuing tour, and stout trim old veterans with starched neckcloths and neat-brushed hats.

"*A qui cette voiture là?*" said one gentleman courier with a large morocco moneybag and earrings to another with earrings and a large morocco moneybag.

"*C'est à Kirsch, je bense—je l'ai vu toute à l'heure—qui brenoit des sangviches dans la voiture,*" said the courier in a fine German-French.

Kirsch, emerging presently from the neighborhood of the hold, came to give an account of himself to his brother interpreters. He informed them that the carriage belonged to a nabob from Calcutta and Jamaica, enormously rich, and with whom he was engaged to travel. And at this moment a young gentle-

man who had been warned off the bridge between the paddle boxes, and who had dropped thence onto the roof of Lord Methuselah's carriage, from which he made his way over other carriages and imperials until he had clambered onto his own, descended thence and through the window into the body of the carriage, to the applause of the couriers looking on.

"*Nous allons avoir une belle traversée, Monsieur George*," said the courier, with a grin as he lifted his gold-laced cap.

"Damn your French," said the young gentleman. "Where's the biscuits, ay?" Whereupon Kirsch answered him in the English language.

The imperious young gentleman who gobbled the biscuits (and indeed it was time to refresh himself, for he had breakfasted at Richmond full three hours before) was our young friend George Osborne. Uncle Jos and his mamma were on the quarterdeck with a gentleman of whom they used to see a good deal, and the four were about to make a summer tour.

"What a heavenly day!" Emmy said, and added with great originality, "I hope we shall have a calm passage."

Jos waved his hand scornfully. "If you had made the voyages we have," he said, "you wouldn't much care about the weather."

In due time this happy party landed at the quays of Rotterdam, whence they were transported by another steamer to the city of Cologne. Here the carriage and the family took to the shore, and Jos was not a little gratified to see his arrival announced in the Cologne newspapers as "*Herr Graf Lord von Sedley nebst Begleitung aus London.*" He had his Court dress with him, he had insisted that Dobbin should bring his regimental paraphernalia, he announced it was his intention to be presented at some foreign Courts and pay his respects to the sovereigns of the countries which he honored with a visit.

Wherever the party stopped and an opportunity was offered, Mr. Jos left his own card and the Major's upon "our Minister." It was with great difficulty that he could be restrained from putting on his cocked hat and tights to wait upon the English consul at the Free City of Judenstadt, when that hospitable functionary asked our travelers to dinner. He kept a journal of his voyage, and noted elaborately the defects or excellences of the various inns at which he put up, and of the wines and dishes of which he partook.

As for Emmy, she was very happy and pleased. Dobbin used to carry about for her her stool and sketchbook, and admired the drawings of the good-natured little artist as they had never been admired before. She sat upon steamers' decks and drew crags and castles, or she mounted upon donkeys and ascended to ancient robber towers, attended by her two aides-de-camp, Georgy and Dobbin. She laughed, and the Major did too, at his droll figure on donkeyback, with his long legs touching the ground. He was the interpreter for the party, having a good military knowledge of the German language, and he and the delighted George fought the campaigns of the Rhine and the Palatinate. In the course of a few weeks, and by assiduously conversing with Herr Kirsch on the box of the carriage, Georgy made prodigious advance in the knowledge of High Dutch, and could talk to hotel waiters and postilions in a way that charmed his mother and amused his guardian.

Mr. Jos did not much engage in the afternoon excursions of his fellow-travelers. He slept a good deal after dinner, or basked in the arbors of the pleasant inn gardens, and whether he woke or slept his friends did not very much miss him. Yes, they were very happy. They went to the opera often of evenings—to those snug, unassuming, dear old operas in the German towns. Here it was that Emmy found her delight, and was introduced for the first time to the wonders of Mozart and Cimarosa. The Major's musical taste has been before alluded to, and his performances on the flute commended. But perhaps the chief pleasure he had in these operas was in watching Emmy's rapture while listening to them. A new world of love and beauty broke upon her when she was introduced to those divine compositions.

I like to dwell upon this period of her life, and to think that she was cheerful and happy. You see she has not had too much of that sort of existence as yet, and has not fallen in the way of means to educate her tastes or her intelligence. She has been domineered over hitherto by vulgar intellects. And it must be remembered that this poor lady had never met a gentleman in her life until this present moment. The Major had very long legs, a yellow face, and a slight lisp, which at first was rather ridiculous. But his thoughts were just, his brains were fairly good, his life was honest and pure, and his heart warm and humble. He certainly had very large hands and feet, which the two George Osbornes used to caricature and laugh at, and their jeers and laughter perhaps led poor little Emmy astray as to his worth. But have we not all been misled about our heroes, and changed our opinions a hundred times? Emmy, in this happy time, found that hers underwent a very great change in the respect of the merits of the Major.

Perhaps it was the happiest time of both their lives indeed, if they did but know it—and who does? Which of us can point out and say that was the culmination—that was the summit of human joy! But at all events this couple were very decently contented, and enjoyed as pleasant a summer tour as any pair that left England that year. Georgy was always present at the play, but it was the Major who put Emmy's shawl on after the entertainment, and in the walks and excursions the young lad would be on ahead and up a tower stair or a tree while the soberer couple were below, the Major smoking his cigar with great placidity and constancy while Emmy sketched the sight or the ruin.

CHAPTER LXII

At the little comfortable ducal town of Pumpernickel they arrived with the carriage and courier at the Erbprinz Hotel. Pumpernickel stands in the midst of a happy valley, through which sparkles—to mingle with the Rhine somewhere, but I have not the map at hand to say exactly at what point—the fertilizing stream of the Pump. In some places the river is big enough to support a ferryboat, in others to turn a mill.

The theater of Pumpernickel is known and famous in that quarter of Germany. It languished a little when the present Duke in his youth insisted upon having his own operas played there, and it is said one day, in a fury, from his place in the orchestra, when he attended a rehearsal, broke a bassoon on the head of the chapel master, who was conducting and led too slow; and during which time the Duchess Sophia wrote domestic comedies which must have been very dreary to witness. But the Prince executes his music in private now, and the Duchess only gives away her plays to the foreigners of distinction who visit her kind little Court.

It is conducted with no small comfort and splendor. When there are balls, though there may be four hundred people at supper there is a servant in scarlet and lace to attend upon every four, and everyone is served on silver. There are festivals and entertainments going continually on, and the Duke had his chamberlains and equerries, and the Duchess her mistress of the wardrobe and ladies of honor, just like any other and more potent potentates.

Before the winter was far advanced it is actually on record that Emmy took a night and received company with great propriety and modesty. She had a French master who complimented her upon the purity of her accent and her facility of learning. The fact is she had learned long ago, and grounded herself subsequently in the grammar so as to be able to teach it to George; and Madame Strumpff came to give her lessons in singing, which she performed so well and with such a true voice that the Major's windows, who had lodgings opposite, under the Prime Minister, were always open to hear the lesson. Some of the German ladies, who are very sentimental and simple in their tastes, fell in love with her and began to call her *du* at once. These are trivial details, but they relate to happy times. The Major made himself George's tutor and read Caesar and mathematics with him, and they had a German master and rode out of evenings by the side of Emmy's carriage—she was always too timid, and made a dreadful outcry at the slightest disturbance on horseback. So she drove about with one of her dear German friends and Jos asleep on the back seat of the barouche.

He was becoming very sweet upon the Gräfin Fanny de Butterbrod, a very gentle, tenderhearted and unassuming young creature, a Canoness and Countess in her own right, but with scarcely ten pounds per year to her fortune. And Fanny for her part declared that to be Amelia's sister was the greatest delight that Heaven could bestow on her, and Jos might have put a Countess's shield and coronet by the side of his own arms on his carriage and forks when—when events occurred, and those grand fêtes given upon the marriage of the hereditary Prince of Pumpernickel with the lovely Princess Amelia of Humbourg-Schlippenschloppen took place.

At this festival the magnificence displayed was such as had not been known in the little German place since the days of the prodigal Victor XIV. All the neighboring Princes, Princesses, and grandees were invited to the feast. Garlands and triumphal arches were hung across the road to welcome the young bride. The great St. Michael's fountain ran with uncommonly sour wine, while that in the Artillery Place frothed with beer. The great waters played;

and poles were put up in the park and gardens for the happy peasantry, which they might climb at their leisure, carrying off watches, silver forks, prize sausages hung with pink ribbon, etc., at the top. Georgy got one, wrenching it off, having swarmed up the pole to the delight of the spectators, and sliding down with the rapidity of a fall of water. But it was for the glory's sake merely. The boy gave the sausage to a peasant who had very nearly seized it and stood at the foot of the mast, blubbering because he was unsuccessful.

Crowds of foreigners arrived for the fêtes, and of English of course. Besides the Court balls, public balls were given at the Town Hall and the Redoute, and in the former place there was a room for trente-et-quarante and roulette established for the week of the festivities only, and by one of the great German companies from Ems or Aix-la-Chapelle. The officers or inhabitants of the town were not allowed to play at these games, but strangers, peasants, ladies, were admitted, and anyone who chose to lose or win money.

That little scapegrace Georgy Osborne among others, whose pockets were always full of dollars and whose relations were away at the grand festival of the Court, came to the Stadthaus ball in company of his uncle's courier, Mr. Kirsch, and having only peeped into a playroom at Baden Baden when he hung on Dobbin's arm, and where of course he was not permitted to gamble, came eagerly to this part of the entertainment, and hankered round the tables where the croupiers and the punters were at work. Women were playing. They were masked, some of them; this license was allowed in these wild times of carnival.

A woman with light hair, in a low dress by no means so fresh as it had been, and with a black mask on through the eyelets of which her eyes twinkled strangely, was seated at one of the roulette tables with a card and a pin and a couple of florins before her. As the croupier called out the color and number, she pricked on the card with great care and regularity, and only ventured her money on the colors after the red or black had come up a certain number of times. It was strange to look at her.

But in spite of her care and assiduity she guessed wrong, and the last two florins followed each other under the croupier's rake as he cried out with his inexorable voice the winning color and number. She gave a sigh, a shrug with her shoulders, which were already too much out of her gown, and dashing the pin through the card on the table, sat thrumming it for a while. Then she looked round her and saw Georgy's honest face staring at the scene. The little scamp! What business had he to be there? When she saw the boy, at whose face she looked hard through her shining eyes and mask, she said, "*Monsieur n'est pas joueur?*"

"*Non, madame,*" said the boy, but she must have known from his accent of what country he was, for she answered him with a "You have nevare played—will you do me a littl' favor?"

"What is it?" said Georgy, blushing again. Mr. Kirsch was at work for his part at the rouge et noir and did not see his young master.

"Play this for me, if you please. Put it on any number, any number." And she took from her bosom a purse, and out of it a gold piece, the only coin

there, and she put it into George's hand. The boy laughed, and did as he was bid.

The number came up sure enough. There is a power that arranges that, they say, for beginners.

"Thank you," said she, pulling the money toward her, "thank you. What is your name?"

"My name's Osborne," said Georgy, and was fingering in his own pockets for dollars, and just about to make a trial, when the Major in his uniform and Jos *en marquis* from the Court ball made their appearance. Other people, finding the entertainment stupid and preferring the fun at the Stadthaus, had quitted the palace ball earlier; but it is probable the Major and Jos had gone home and found the boy's absence, for the former instantly went up to him and, taking him by the shoulder, pulled him briskly back from the place of temptation. Then, looking round the room, he saw Kirsch employed as we have said, and going up to him asked how he dared to bring Mr. George to such a place.

"*Laissez-moi tranquille*," said Mr. Kirsch, very much excited by play and wine. "*Il faut s'amuser, parbleu. Je ne suis pas au service de monsieur.*"

Seeing his condition, the Major did not choose to argue with the man, but contented himself with drawing away George and asking Jos if he would come away. He was standing close by the lady in the mask, who was playing with good luck now, and looking on much interested at the game.

"Hadn't you better come, Jos," the Major said, "with George and me?"

"I'll stop and go home with that rascal Kirsch," Jos said, and for the same reason of modesty, which he thought ought to be preserved before the boy, Dobbin did not care to remonstrate with Jos, but left him and walked home with Georgy.

"Did you play?" asked the Major when they were out and on their way home.

The boy said, "No."

"Give me your word of honor as a gentleman that you never will."

"Why?" said the boy. "It seems very good fun." And in a very eloquent and impressive manner the Major showed him why he shouldn't, and would have enforced his precepts by the example of Georgy's own father had he liked to say anything that should reflect on the other's memory. When he had housed him, he went to bed and saw his light, in the little room outside of Amelia's, presently disappear. Amelia's followed half an hour afterward. I don't know what made the Major note it so accurately.

Jos, however, remained behind over the play table. He was no gambler, but not averse to the little excitement of the sport now and then, and he had some napoleons chinking in the embroidered pockets of his Court waistcoat. He put down one over the fair shoulder of the little gambler before him, and they won. She made a little movement to make room for him by her side, and just took the skirt of her gown from a vacant chair there.

"Come and give me good luck," she said, still in a foreign accent, quite different from that frank and perfectly English "Thank you" with which

she had saluted Georgy's coup in her favor. The portly gentleman, looking round to see that nobody of rank observed him, sat down. He muttered:

"Ah, really, well now, God bless my soul. I'm very fortunate, I'm sure to give you good fortune," and other words of compliment and confusion.

"Do you play much?" the foreign mask said.

"I put a nap or two down," said Jos with a superb air, flinging down a gold piece.

"Yes—ay nap after dinner," said the mask archly. But Jos looking frightened, she continued, in her pretty French accent: "You do not play to win. No more do I. I play to forget, but I cannot. I cannot forget old times, monsieur. Your little nephew is the image of his father, and you—you are not changed—but yes, you are. Everybody changes, everybody forgets, nobody has any heart."

"Good God, who is it?" asked Jos in a flutter.

"Can't you guess, Joseph Sedley?" said the little woman in a sad voice, and undoing her mask, she looked at him. "You have forgotten me."

"Good heavens! Mrs. Crawley!" gasped out Jos.

"Rebecca," said the other, putting her hand on his, but she followed the game still, all the time she was looking at him.

"I am stopping at the Elephant," she continued. "Ask for Madame de Raudon. I saw my dear Amelia today. How pretty she looked, and how happy! So do you! Everybody but me, who am wretched, Joseph Sedley." And she put her money over from the red to the black, as if by a chance movement of her hand, and while she was wiping her eyes with a pocket handkerchief fringed with torn lace.

The red came up again, and she lost the whole of that stake. "Come away," she said. "Come with me a little—we are old friends, are we not, dear Mr. Sedley?"

CHAPTER LXIII

We must pass over a part of Mrs. Rebecca Crawley's biography with that lightness and delicacy which the world demands—the moral world that has, perhaps, no particular objection to vice, but an insuperable repugnance to hearing vice called by its proper name. There are things we do and know perfectly well in Vanity Fair, though we never speak of them, as the Ahrimanians worship the Devil but don't mention him, and a polite public will no more bear to read an authentic description of vice than a truly refined English or American female will permit the word "breeches" to be pronounced in her chaste hearing. And yet, madam, both are walking the world before our faces every day, without much shocking us. If you were to blush every time they went by, what complexions you would have! It is only when their naughty names are called out that your modesty has any occasion to show alarm or sense of outrage, and it has been the wish of the present writer, all through this story, deferentially to submit to the fashion at present prevailing,

and only to hint at the existence of wickedness in a light, easy, and agreeable manner, so that nobody's fine feelings may be offended.

I defy anyone to say that our Becky, who has certainly some vices, has not been presented to the public in a perfectly genteel and inoffensive manner. In describing this siren singing and smiling, coaxing and cajoling, the author, with modest pride, asks his readers all round, Has he once forgotten the laws of politeness and showed the monster's hideous tail above water? No! Those who like may peep down under the waves that are pretty transparent, and see it writhing and twirling, diabolically hideous and slimy, flapping among bones or curling round corpses; but above the waterline, I ask, has not everything been proper, agreeable, and decorous, and has any the most squeamish moralist in Vanity Fair a right to cry fie?

When, however, the siren disappears and dives below, down among the dead men, the water of course grows turbid over her, and it is labor lost to look into it ever so curiously. They look pretty enough when they sit upon a rock twanging their harps and combing their hair, and sing and beckon to you to come and hold the looking-glass; but when they sink into their native element, depend on it, those mermaids are about no good, and we had best not examine the fiendish marine cannibals, reveling and feasting on their wretched pickled victims. And so, when Becky is out of the way, be sure that she is not particularly well employed, and that the less that is said about her doings is in fact the better.

If we were to give a full account of her proceedings during a couple of years that followed after the Curzon Street catastrophe, there might be some reason for people to say this book was improper. The actions of very vain, heartless, pleasure-seeking people are very often improper (as are many of yours, my friend with the grave face and spotless reputation—but that is merely by the way), and what are those of a woman without faith—or love—or character? And I am inclined to think that there was a period in Mrs. Becky's life when she was seized, not by remorse but by a kind of despair, and absolutely neglected her person, and did not even care for her reputation.

This *abattement* and degradation did not take place all at once. It was brought about by degrees after her calamity and after many struggles to keep up—as a man who goes overboard hangs onto a spar while any hope is left, and then flings it away and goes down when he finds that struggling is in vain.

She lingered about London while her husband was making preparations for his departure to his seat of government, and it is believed made more than one attempt to see her brother-in-law, Sir Pitt Crawley, and to work upon his feelings, which she had almost enlisted in her favor. As Sir Pitt and Mr. Wenham were walking down to the House of Commons, the latter spied Mrs. Rawdon in a black veil and lurking near the palace of the legislature. She sneaked away when her eyes met those of Wenham, and indeed never succeeded in her designs upon the Baronet.

Probably Lady Jane interposed. I have heard that she quite astonished her husband by the spirit which she exhibited in this quarrel, and her determination to disown Mrs. Becky. Of her own movement, she invited Rawdon to

come and stop in Gaunt Street until his departure for Coventry Island, knowing that with him for a guard Mrs. Becky would not try to force her door; and she looked curiously at the superscriptions of all the letters which arrived for Sir Pitt, lest he and his sister-in-law should be corresponding. Not but that Rebecca could have written had she a mind, but she did not try to see or to write to Pitt at his own house, and after one or two attempts consented to his demand that the correspondence regarding her conjugal differences should be carried on by lawyers only.

The fact was that Pitt's mind had been poisoned against her. A short time after Lord Steyne's accident Wenham had been with the Baronet, and given him such a biography of Mrs. Becky as had astonished the Member for Queen's Crawley. He knew everything regarding her—who her father was, in what year her mother danced at the opera, what had been her previous history, and what her conduct during her married life. As I have no doubt that the greater part of the story was false and dictated by interested malevolence, it shall not be repeated here. But Becky was left with a sad, sad reputation in the esteem of a country gentleman and relative who had been once rather partial to her.

The revenues of the Governor of Coventry Island are not large. A part of them were set aside by His Excellency for the payment of certain outstanding debts and liabilities, the charges incident on his high situation required considerable expense. Finally, it was found that he could not spare to his wife more than three hundred pounds a year, which he proposed to pay to her on an understanding that she would never trouble him. Otherwise, scandal, separation, Doctors' Commons would ensue. But it was Mr. Wenham's business, Lord Steyne's business, Rawdon's—everybody's—to get her out of the country, and hush up a most disagreeable affair.

She was probably so much occupied in arranging these affairs of business with her husband's lawyers that she forgot to take any step whatever about her son, the little Rawdon, and did not even once propose to go and see him. That young gentleman was consigned to the entire guardianship of his aunt and uncle, the former of whom had always possessed a great share of the child's affection. His mamma wrote him a neat letter from Boulogne when she quitted England, in which she requested him to mind his book and said she was going to take a Continental tour, during which she would have the pleasure of writing to him again. But she never did for a year afterward, and not, indeed, until Sir Pitt's only boy, always sickly, died of whooping cough and measles. Then Rawdon's Mamma wrote the most affectionate composition to her darling son, who was made heir of Queen's Crawley by this accident and drawn more closely than ever to the kind lady whose tender heart had already adopted him. Rawdon Crawley, then grown a tall, fine lad, blushed when he got the letter. "Oh, Aunt Jane, you are my mother," he said, "and not—and not that one!" But he wrote back a kind and respectful letter to Mrs. Rebecca, then living at a boardinghouse at Florence. But we are advancing matters.

Our darling Becky's first flight was not very far. She perched upon the

French coast at Boulogne, that refuge of so much exiled English innocence, and there lived in rather a genteel, widowed manner, with a femme de chambre and a couple of rooms, at a hotel. She dined at the table d'hôte, where people thought her very pleasant, and where she entertained her neighbors by stories of her brother, Sir Pitt, and her great London acquaintance, talking that easy, fashionable slipslop which has so much effect upon certain folks of small breeding. She passed with many of them for a person of importance. She gave little tea parties in her private room, and shared in the innocent amusements of the place—in sea bathing and in jaunts in open carriages, in strolls on the sands and in visits to the play. Mrs. Burjoice, the printer's lady, who was boarding with her family at the hotel for the summer, and to whom her Burjoice came of a Saturday and Sunday, voted her charming until that little rogue of a Burjoice began to pay her too much attention. But there was nothing in the story, only that Becky was always affable, easy, and good-natured—and with men especially.

The behavior of the men had undergone too I don't know what change. Grinstone showed his teeth and laughed in her face with a familiarity that was not pleasant. Little Bob Suckling, who was cap in hand to her three months before and would walk a mile in the rain to see for her carriage in the line at Gaunt House, was talking to Fitzoof of the guards (Lord Heehaw's son) one day upon the jetty as Becky took her walk there. Little Bobby nodded to her over his shoulder without moving his hat, and continued his conversation with the heir of Heehaw. Tom Raikes tried to walk into her sitting-room at the inn with a cigar in his mouth, but she closed the door upon him and would have locked it only that his fingers were inside. She began to feel that she was very lonely indeed. "If *he'd* been here," she said, "those cowards never would have dared to insult me." She thought about "him" with great sadness, and perhaps longing—about his honest, stupid, constant kindness and fidelity, his never-ceasing obedience, his good humor, his bravery and courage. Very likely she cried, for she was particularly lively and had put on a little extra rouge when she came down to dinner.

She rouged regularly now, and—and her maid got cognac for her besides that which was charged in the hotel bill.

Perhaps the insults of the men were not, however, so intolerable to her as the sympathy of certain women. Mrs. Crackenbury and Mrs. Washington White passed through Boulogne on their way to Switzerland. (The party were protected by Colonel Horner, young Beaumoris, and of course old Crackenbury, and Mrs. White's little girl.) *They* did not avoid her. They giggled, cackled, tattled, condoled, consoled, and patronized her until they drove her almost wild with rage. To be patronized by *them!* she thought as they went away simpering after kissing her. And she heard Beaumoris's laugh ringing on the stair, and knew quite well how to interpret his hilarity.

It was after this visit that Becky, who had paid her weekly bills, Becky, who had made herself agreeable to everybody in the house, who smiled at the landlady, called the waiters "monsieur," and paid the chambermaids in politeness and apologies—what far more than compensated for a little nig-

gardliness in point of money (of which Becky never was free)—that Becky, we say, received a notice to quit from the landlord, who had been told by someone that she was quite an unfit person to have at his hotel, where English ladies would not sit down with her. And she was forced to fly into lodgings, of which the dullness and solitude were most wearisome to her.

Still she held up in spite of these rebuffs, and tried to make a character for herself, and conquer scandal. She went to church very regularly, and sang louder than anybody there. She took up the cause of the widows of the shipwrecked fishermen, and gave work and drawings for the Quashyboo Mission. She subscribed to the assembly and *wouldn't* waltz. In a word, she did everything that was respectable, and that is why we dwell upon this part of her career with more fondness than upon subsequent parts of her history, which are not so pleasant. She saw people avoiding her and still laboriously smiled upon them. You never could suppose from her countenance what pangs of humiliation she might be enduring inwardly.

Her history was after all a mystery. Parties were divided about her. Some people who took the trouble to busy themselves in the matter said that she was the criminal, while others vowed that she was as innocent as a lamb and that her odious husband was in fault. She won over a good many by bursting into tears about her boy and exhibiting the most frantic grief when his name was mentioned, or she saw anybody like him. She gained good Mrs. Alderney's heart in that way, who was rather the queen of British Boulogne and gave the most dinners and balls of all the residents there, by weeping when Master Alderney came from Dr. Swishtail's academy to pass his holidays with his mother. "He and her Rawdon were of the same age, and *so* like," Becky said, in a voice choking with agony, whereas there was five years' difference between the boys' ages and no more likeness between them than between my respected reader and his humble servant. Wenham, when he was going abroad on his way to Kissingen to join Lord Steyne, enlightened Mrs. Alderney on this point, and told her how he was much more able to describe little Rawdon than his mamma, who notoriously hated him and never saw him; how he was thirteen years old while little Alderney was but nine, fair, while the other darling was dark—in a word, caused the lady in question to repent of her good humor.

Whenever Becky made a little circle for herself with incredible toils and labor, somebody came and swept it down rudely, and she had all her work to begin over again. It was very hard, very hard, lonely and disheartening.

From one colony to another Becky fled uneasily. From Boulogne to Dieppe, from Dieppe to Caen, from Caen to Tours—trying with all her might to be respectable, and alas! always found out some day or other, and pecked out of the cage by the real daws.

Then she tried keeping house with a female friend, then the double ménage began to quarrel and get into debt. Then she determined upon a boarding-house existence, and lived for some time at that famous mansion kept by Madame de Saint-Amour in the Rue Royale at Paris, where she began exercising her graces and fascinations upon the shabby dandies and fly-blown

beauties who frequented her landlady's salons. Becky loved society, and indeed could no more exist without it than an opium-eater without his dram, and she was happy enough at the period of her boardinghouse life. "The women here are as amusing as those in Mayfair," she told an old London friend who met her, "only their dresses are not quite so fresh. The men wear cleaned gloves, and are sad rogues, certainly, but they are not worse than Jack This and Tom That. The mistress of the house is a little vulgar, but I don't think she is so vulgar as Lady ——." And here she named the name of a great leader of fashion that I would die rather than reveal. In fact, when you saw Madame de Saint-Amour's rooms lighted up of a night, men with plaques and cordons at the écarté tables, and the women at a little distance, you might fancy yourself for a while in good society, and that madame was a real Countess. Many people did so fancy, and Becky was for a while one of the most dashing ladies of the Countess's *salons*.

But it is probable that her old creditors of 1815 found her out and caused her to leave Paris, for the poor little woman was forced to fly from the city rather suddenly, and went thence to Brussels.

How well she remembered the place! She grinned as she looked up at the little entresol which she had occupied, and thought of the Bareacres family bawling for horses and flight as their carriage stood in the porte-cochère of the hotel. She went to Waterloo and to Laeken, where George Osborne's monument much struck her. She made a little sketch of it. "That poor Cupid!" she said. "How dreadfully he was in love with me, and what a fool he was! I wonder whether little Emmy is alive. It was a good little creature—and that fat brother of hers. I have his funny fat picture still among my papers. They were kind, simple people."

At Brussels Becky arrived recommended by Madame de Saint-Amour to her friend Madame la Comtesse de Borodino, widow of Napoleon's general, the famous Count de Borodino, who was left with no resource by the deceased hero but that of a table d'hôte and an écarté table. Second-rate dandies and roués, widow ladies who always have a lawsuit, and very simple English folks who fancy they see "Continental society" at these houses put down their money, or ate their meals, at Madame de Borodino's tables. The gallant young fellows treated the company round to champagne at the table d'hôte, rode out with the women, or hired horses on country excursions, clubbed money to take boxes at the play or the opera, betted over the fair shoulders of the ladies at the écarté tables, and wrote home to their parents in Devonshire about their felicitious introduction to foreign society.

Here, as at Paris, Becky was a boardinghouse queen, and ruled in select pensions. She never refused the champagne, or the bouquets, or the drives into the country, or the private boxes; but what she preferred was the écarté at night—and she played audaciously. First she played only for a little, then for five-franc pieces, then for napoleons, then for notes. Then she would not be able to pay her month's pension, then she borrowed from the young gentlemen, then she got into cash again and bullied Madame de Borodino, whom she had coaxed and wheedled before. Then she was playing for ten

sous at a time, and in a dire state of poverty; then her quarter's allowance would come in and she would pay off Madame de Borodino's score and would once more take the cards against Monsieur de Rossignol or the Chevalier de Raff.

When Becky left Brussels, the sad truth is that she owed three months' pension to Madame de Borodino, of which fact, and of the gambling, and of the drinking, and of the going down on her knees to the Reverend Mr. Muff, *Ministre Anglicain*, and borrowing money of him, and of her coaxing and flirting with Milor Noodle, son of Sir Noodle, pupil of the Reverend Mr. Muff, whom she used to take into her private room and of whom she won large sums at écarté—of which fact, I say, and of a hundred of her other knaveries, the Countess de Borodino informs every English person who stops at her establishment, and announces that Madame Rawdon was no better than a *vipère*.

CHAPTER LXIV

So our little wanderer went about setting up her tent in various cities of Europe, as restless as Ulysses. Her taste for disrespectability grew more and more remarkable. She became a perfect Bohemian ere long, herding with people whom it would make your hair stand on end to meet.

There is no town of any mark in Europe but it has its little colony of English raffs—men whose names Mr. Hemp the officer reads out periodically at the sheriff's court, young gentlemen of very good family often, only that the latter disowns them—frequenters of billiard rooms and estaminets, patrons of foreign races and gaming tables. They people the debtors' prisons, they drink and swagger, they fight and brawl, they run away without paying, they have duels with French and German officers, they cheat Mr. Spooney at écarté, they get the money and drive off to Baden in magnificent britzskas. They try their infallible martingale, and lurk about the tables with empty pockets, shabby bullies, penniless bucks, until they can swindle a Jew banker with a sham bill of exchange, or find another Mr. Spooney to rob. The alternations of splendor and misery which these people undergo are very queer to view. Their life must be one of great excitement. Becky—must it be owned?—took to this life, and took to it not unkindly. She went about from town to town among these Bohemians. The lucky Mrs. Rawdon was known at every play table in Germany. She and Madame de Cruchecassée kept house at Florence together. It is said she was ordered out of Munich, and my friend Mr. Frederick Pigeon avers that it was at her house at Lausanne that he was hocused at supper and lost eight hundred pounds to Major Loder and the Honorable Mr. Deuceace. We are bound, you see, to give some account of Becky's biography, but of this part the less, perhaps, that is said the better.

They say that when Mrs. Crawley was particularly down on her luck, she gave concerts and lessons in music here and there. There was a Madame de Raudon who certainly had a *matinée musicale* at Wildbad, accompanied by Herr Spoff, premier pianist to the Hospodar of Wallachia, and my little friend

Mr. Eaves, who knew everybody and had traveled everywhere, always used to declare that he was at Strasburg in the year 1830 when a certain Madame Rebecque made her appearance in the opera of the *Dame Blanche*, giving occasion to a furious row in the theater there. She was hissed off the stage by the audience, partly from her own incompetency, but chiefly from the ill-advised sympathy of some persons in the parquet (where the officers of the garrison had their admissions), and Eaves was certain that the unfortunate débutante in question was no other than Mrs. Rawdon Crawley.

She was, in fact, no better than a vagabond upon this earth. When she got her money, she gambled; when she had gambled it, she was put to shifts to live. Who knows how or by what means she succeeded? It is said that she was once seen at St. Petersburg, but was summarily dismissed from that capital by the police, so that there cannot be any possibility of truth in the report that she was a Russian spy at Töplitz and Vienna afterward. I have even been informed that at Paris she discovered a relation of her own, no less a person than her maternal grandmother, who was not by any means a Montmorency, but a hideous old box opener at a theater on the Boulevards. The meeting between them, of which other persons, as it is hinted elsewhere, seem to have been acquainted, must have been a very affecting interview. The present historian can give no certain details regarding the event.

It happened at Rome once that Mrs. de Rawdon's half-year's salary had just been paid into the principal banker's there, and as everybody who had a balance of above five hundred scudi was invited to the balls which this prince of merchants gave during the winter, Becky had the honor of a card and appeared at one of the Prince and Princess Polonia's splendid evening entertainments. The Princess was of the family of Pompili, lineally descended from the second king of Rome and Egeria of the house of Olympus, while the Prince's grandfather, Alessandro Polonia, sold wash balls, essences, tobacco, and pocket handkerchiefs, ran errands for gentlemen, and lent money in a small way. All the great company in Rome thronged to his saloons—Princes, Dukes, ambassadors, artists, fiddlers, monsignori, young bears with their leaders, every rank and condition of men. His balls blazed with light and magnificence, were resplendent with gilt frames (containing pictures) and dubious antiques. And the enormous gilt crown and arms of the princely owner, a gold mushroom on a crimson field (the color of the pocket handkerchiefs which he sold), and the silver fountain of the Pompili family shone all over the roof, doors, and panels of the house, and over the grand velvet baldaquins prepared to receive Popes and Emperors.

So Becky, who had arrived in the diligence from Florence and was lodged at an inn in a very modest way, got a card for Prince Polonia's entertainment, and her maid dressed her with unusual care, and she went to this fine ball leaning on the arm of Major Loder, with whom she happened to be traveling at the time (the same man who shot Prince Ravioli at Naples the next year, and was caned by Sir John Buckskin for carrying four kings in his hat besides those which he used in playing at écarté). And this pair went into the rooms together, and Becky saw a number of old faces which she remembered in

happier days, when she was not innocent but not found out. Major Loder knew a great number of foreigners, keen-looking, whiskered men with dirty striped ribbons in their buttonholes and a very small display of linen; but his own countrymen, it might be remarked, eschewed the Major. Becky too knew some ladies here and there—French widows, dubious Italian Countesses whose husbands had treated them ill—faugh—what shall we say, we who have moved among some of the finest company of Vanity Fair, of this refuse and sediment of rascals? If we play, let it be with clean cards, and not with this dirty pack. But every man who has formed one of the innumerable army of travelers has seen these marauding irregulars hanging on like Nym and Pistol to the main force, wearing the King's colors and boasting of his commission, but pillaging for themselves and occasionally gibbeted by the roadside.

Well, she was hanging on the arm of Major Loder, and they went through the rooms together, and drank a great quantity of champagne at the buffet, where the people, and especially the Major's irregular corps, struggled furiously for refreshments, of which when the pair had had enough, they pushed on until they reached the Duchess's own pink-velvet saloon at the end of the suite of apartments (where the statue of the Venus is, and the great Venice looking-glasses framed in silver), and where the princely family were entertaining their most distinguished guests at a round table at supper. It was just such a little select banquet as that of which Becky recollected that she had partaken at Lord Steyne's—and there he sat at Polonia's table, and she saw him.

The scar cut by the diamond on his white, bald, shining forehead made a burning red mark; his red whiskers were dyed of a purple hue, which made his pale face look still paler. He wore his collar and Orders, his blue ribbon and Garter. He was a greater prince than any there, though there was a reigning Duke and a Royal Highness, with their Princesses, and near his lordship was seated the beautiful Countess of Belladonna, née de Glandier, whose husband (the Count Paolo della Belladonna), so well known for his brilliant entomological collections, had been long absent on a mission to the Emperor of Morocco.

When Becky beheld that familiar and illustrious face, how vulgar all of a sudden did Major Loder appear to her, and how that odious Captain Rook did smell of tobacco! In one instant she reassumed her fine-ladyship, and tried to look and feel as if she was in Mayfair once more. "That woman looks stupid and ill-humored," she thought. "I am sure she can't amuse him. No, he must be bored by her—he never was by me." A hundred such touching hopes, fears, and memories palpitated in her little heart as she looked with her brightest eyes (the rouge which she wore up to her eyelids made them twinkle) toward the great nobleman.

Of a Star and Garter night Lord Steyne used also to put on his grandest manner, and to look and speak like a great prince as he was. Becky admired him smiling sumptuously, easy, lofty, and stately. Ah, *bon Dieu*, what a pleasant companion he was, what a brilliant wit, what a rich fund of talk, what a grand manner!—And she had exchanged this for Major Loder, reeking of

cigars and brandy and water, and Captain Rook with his horse-jockey jokes and prize-ring slang, and their like. "I wonder whether he will know me," she thought. Lord Steyne was talking and laughing with a great and illustrious lady at his side when he looked up and saw Becky.

She was all over in a flutter as their eyes met, and she put on the very best smile she could muster, and dropped him a little, timid, imploring curtsy. He stared aghast at her for a minute, as Macbeth might on beholding Banquo's sudden appearance at his ball supper, and remained looking at her with open mouth when that horrid Major Loder pulled her away.

"Come away into the supper room, Mrs. R," was that gentleman's remark. "Seeing these nobs grubbing away has made me peckish too. Let's go and try the old governor's champagne." Becky thought that the Major had had a great deal too much already.

The day after she went to walk on the Pincian Hill—the Hyde Park of the Roman idlers—possibly in hopes to have another sight of Lord Steyne. But she met another acquaintance there. It was Mr. Fiche, his lordship's confidential man, who came up nodding to her rather familiarly and putting his finger to his hat.

"I knew that madame was here," he said. "I followed her from her hotel. I have some advice to give madame."

"From the Marquis of Steyne?" Becky asked, resuming as much of her dignity as she could muster, and not a little agitated by hope and expectation.

"No," said the valet, "it is from me. Rome is very unwholesome."

"Not at this season, Monsieur Fiche—not till after Easter."

"I tell madame it is unwholesome now. There is always malaria for some people. That cursed marsh wind kills many at all seasons. Look, Madame Crawley, you were always *bon enfant*, and I have an interest in you, *parole d'honneur*. Be warned. Go away from Rome, I tell you—or you will be ill and die."

Becky laughed, though in rage and fury. "What! Assassinate poor little me?" she said. "How romantic! Does my lord carry bravos for couriers, and stilettos in the fourgons? Bah! I will stay, if but to plague him. I have those who will defend me while I am here."

It was Monsieur Fiche's turn to laugh now. "Defend you," he said. "And who? The Major, the Captain, any of these gambling men whom madame sees, would take her life for a hundred louis. We know things about Major Loder (he is no more Major than I am my lord the Marquis) which would send him to the galleys or worse. We know everything, and have friends everywhere. We know whom you saw at Paris, and what relations you found there. Yes, madame may stare, but we do. How was it that no Minister on the Continent would receive madame? She has offended somebody who never forgives—whose rage redoubled when he saw you. He was like a madman last night when he came home. Madame de Belladonna made him a scene about you and fired off in one of her furies."

"Oh, it was Madame de Belladonna, was it?" Becky said, relieved a little, for the information she had just got had scared her.

"No—she does not matter—she is always jealous. I tell you it was monseigneur. You did wrong to show yourself to him. And if you stay here you will repent it. Mark my words. Go. Here is my lord's carriage." And seizing Becky's arm, he rushed down an alley of the garden as Lord Steyne's barouche, blazing with heraldic devices, came whirling along the avenue borne by the almost priceless horses, and bearing Madame de Belladonna lolling on the cushions, dark, sulky, and blooming, a King Charles in her lap, a white parasol swaying over her head, and old Steyne stretched at her side with a livid face and ghastly eyes. Hate, or anger, or desire caused them to brighten now and then still, but ordinarily they gave no light, and seemed tired of looking out on a world of which almost all the pleasure and all the best beauty had palled upon the worn-out, wicked old man.

"Monseigneur has never recovered the shock of that night, never," Monsieur Fiche whispered to Mrs. Crawley as the carriage flashed by and she peeped out at it from behind the shrubs that hid her. That was a consolation, at any rate, Becky thought.

Whether my lord really had murderous intentions toward Mrs. Becky as Monsieur Fiche said—since monseigneur's death he has returned to his native country, where he lives much respected, and has purchased from his Prince the title of Baron Ficci—and the factotum objected to have to do with assassination, or whether he simply had a commission to frighten Mrs. Crawley out of a city where his lordship proposed to pass the winter and the sight of her would be eminently disagreeable to the great nobleman, is a point which has never been ascertained; but the threat had its effect upon the little woman, and she sought no more to intrude herself upon the presence of her old patron.

Everybody knows the melancholy end of that nobleman, which befell at Naples two months after the French Revolution of 1830, when the Most Honorable George Gustavus, Marquis of Steyne—Earl of Gaunt and of Gaunt Castle, in the Peerage of Ireland, Viscount Hellborough, Baron Pitchley and Grillsby, a Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, of the Golden Fleece of Spain, of the Russian Order of St. Nicholas of the First Class, of the Turkish Order of the Crescent, First Lord of the Powder Closet and Groom of the Back Stairs, Colonel of the Gaunt or Regent's Own Regiment of Militia, a Trustee of the British Museum, an Elder Brother of the Trinity House, a Governor of the White Friars, and D.C.L.—died after a series of fits brought on, as the papers said, by the shock occasioned to his lordship's sensibilities by the downfall of the ancient French monarchy.

An eloquent catalogue appeared in a weekly print describing his virtues, his magnificence, his talents, and his good actions. His sensibility, his attachment to the illustrious House of Bourbon, with which he claimed an alliance, were such that he could not survive the misfortunes of his august kinsmen. His body was buried at Naples, and his heart—that heart which always beat with every generous and noble emotion—was brought back to Castle Gaunt in a silver urn. "In him," Mr. Wagg said, "the poor and the fine arts have lost a beneficent patron, society one of its most brilliant ornaments, and England one of her loftiest patriots and statesmen," etc., etc.

CHAPTER LXV

The day after the meeting at the play table, Jos had himself arrayed with unusual care and splendor, and without thinking it necessary to say a word to any member of his family regarding the occurrences of the previous night, or asking for their company in his walk, he sallied forth at an early hour and was presently seen making inquiries at the door of the Elephant Hotel. In consequence of the fêtes the house was full of company, the tables in the street were already surrounded by persons smoking and drinking the national small beer, the public rooms were in a cloud of smoke; and Mr. Jos having, in his pompous way and with his clumsy German, made inquiries for the person of whom he was in search, was directed to the very top of the house—above the first-floor rooms where some traveling peddlers had lived and were exhibiting their jewelry and brocades—above the second-floor apartments occupied by the *état major* of the gambling firm—above the third-floor rooms, tenanted by the band of renowned Bohemian vaulters and tumblers—and so on to the little cabins of the roof, where, among students, bagmen, small tradesmen, and countryfolks come in for the festival, Becky had found a little nest—as dirty a little refuge as ever beauty lay hid in.

Becky liked the life. She was at home with everybody in the place—peddlers, punters, tumblers, students, and all. She was of a wild, roving nature, inherited from father and mother, who were both Bohemians by taste and circumstance. If a lord was not by, she would talk to his courier with the greatest pleasure. The din, the stir, the drink, the smoke, the tattle of the Hebrew peddlers, the solemn, braggart ways of the poor tumblers, the *sournois* talk of the gambling-table officials, the songs and swagger of the students, and the general buzz and hum of the place had pleased and tickled the little woman, even when her luck was down and she had not wherewithal to pay her bill. How pleasant was all the bustle to her now that her purse was full of the money which little Georgy had won for her the night before!

As Jos came creaking and puffing up the final stairs, and was speechless when he got to the landing, and began to wipe his face and then to look for No. 92, the room where he was directed to seek for the person he wanted, the door of the opposite chamber, No. 90, was open, and a student in jack boots and a dirty *schlafrock* was lying on the bed smoking a long pipe, while another student in long yellow hair, and a braided coat, exceeding smart and dirty too, was actually on his knees at No. 92, bawling through the keyhole supplications to the person within.

"Go away," said a well-known voice, which made Jos thrill. "I expect somebody, I expect my grandpapa. He mustn't see you there."

"*Angel Engländerin*," bellowed the kneeling student with the whity-brown ringlets and large finger ring, "do take compassion upon us! Make an appointment. Dine with me and Fritz at the inn in the park. We will have roast

pheasants and porter, plum pudding and French wine. We shall die if you don't."

"That we will," said the young nobleman on the bed, and this colloquy Jos overheard, though he did not comprehend it, for the reason that he had never studied the language in which it was carried on.

"*Newmero kattervang dooze, si vous plait*," Jos said in his grandest manner, when he was able to speak.

"*Quater fang tooce!*" said the student, starting up, and he bounced into his own room, where he locked the door and where Jos heard him laughing with his comrade on the bed.

The gentleman from Bengal was standing disconcerted by this incident when the door of the 92 opened of itself, and Becky's little head peeped out full of archness and mischief. She lighted on Jos. "It's you," she said, coming out. "How I have been waiting for you! Stop! Not yet—in one minute you shall come in." In that instant she put a rouge pot, a brandy bottle, and a plate of broken meat into the bed, gave one smooth to her hair, and finally let in her visitor.

She had, by way of a morning robe, a pink domino, a trifle faded and soiled and marked here and there with pomatum; but her arms shone out from the loose sleeves of the dress very white and fair, and it was tied round her little waist so as not ill to set off the trim little figure of the wearer. She led Jos by the hand into her garret. "Come in," she said. "Come and talk to me. Sit yonder on the chair." And she gave the civilian's hand a little squeeze, and laughingly placed him upon it. As for herself, she placed herself on the bed—not on the bottle and plate, you may be sure, on which Jos might have reposed had he chosen that seat—and so there she sat and talked with her old admirer.

"How little years have changed you," she said, with a look of tender interest. "I should have known you anywhere. What a comfort it is among strangers to see once more the frank, honest face of an old friend!"

The frank, honest face, to tell the truth, at this moment bore any expression but one of openness and honesty. It was, on the contrary, much perturbed and puzzled in look. Jos was surveying the queer little apartment in which he found his old flame. One of her gowns hung over the bed, another depending from a hook of the door; her bonnet obscured half the looking-glass, on which, too, lay the prettiest little pair of bronze boots; a French novel was on the table by the bedside, with a candle, not of wax. Becky thought of popping that into the bed too, but she only put in the little paper nightcap with which she had put the candle out on going to sleep.

"I should have known you anywhere," she continued. "A woman never forgets some things. And you were the first man I ever—I ever saw."

"Was I, really?" said Jos. "God bless my soul, you—you don't say so."

"When I came with your sister from Chiswick, I was scarcely more than a child," Becky said. "How is that dear love? Oh, her husband was a sad wicked man, and of course it was of me that the poor dear was jealous. As if I cared about him, heigho! when there was somebody—but no—don't let

us talk of old times." And she passed her handkerchief with the tattered lace across her eyelids.

"Is not this a strange place," she continued, "for a woman who has lived in a very different world, too, to be found in? I have had so many griefs and wrongs, Joseph Sedley, I have been made to suffer so cruelly, that I am almost made mad sometimes. I can't stay still in any place, but wander about always restless and unhappy. All my friends have been false to me—all. There is no such thing as an honest man in the world. I was the truest wife that ever lived, though I married my husband out of pique because somebody else—but never mind that. I was true, and he trampled upon me, and deserted me. I was the fondest mother. I had but one child, one darling, one hope, one joy, which I held to my heart with a mother's affection, which was my life, my prayer, my—my blessing; and they—they tore it from me—tore it from me." And she put her hand to her heart with a passionate gesture of despair, burying her face for a moment on the bed.

The brandy bottle inside clinked up against the plate which held the cold sausage. Both were moved, no doubt, by the exhibition of so much grief. Max and Fritz were at the door listening with wonder to Mrs. Becky's sobs and cries. Jos too was a good deal frightened and affected at seeing his old flame in this condition. And she began forthwith to tell her story—a tale so neat, simple, and artless that it was quite evident from hearing her that if ever there was a white-robed angel escaped from Heaven to be subject to the infernal machinations and villainy of fiends here below, that spotless being, that miserable unsullied martyr, was present on the bed before Jos—on the bed, sitting on the brandy bottle.

They had a very long, amicable, and confidential talk there, in the course of which Jos Sedley was somehow made aware, but in a manner that did not in the least scare or offend him, that Becky's heart had first learned to beat at his enchanting presence; that George Osborne had certainly paid an unjustifiable court to *her*, which might account for Amelia's jealousy and their little rupture; but that Becky never gave the least encouragement to the unfortunate officer, and that she had never ceased to think about Jos from the very first day she had seen him, though, of course, her duties as a married woman were paramount—duties which she had always preserved, and would to her dying day, or until the proverbially bad climate in which Colonel Crawley was living should release her from a yoke which his cruelty had rendered odious to her.

Jos went away convinced that she was the most virtuous, as she was one of the most fascinating, of women, and revolving in his mind all sorts of benevolent schemes for her welfare. Her persecutions ought to be ended, she ought to return to the society of which she was an ornament. He would see what ought to be done. She must quit that place and take a quiet lodging. Amelia must come and see her, and befriend her. He would go and settle about it, and consult with the Major. She wept tears of heartfelt gratitude as she parted from him, and pressed his hand as the gallant stout gentleman stooped down to kiss hers.

So Becky bowed Jos out of her little garret with as much grace as if it was a palace of which she did the honors, and that heavy gentleman having disappeared down the stairs, Max and Fritz came out of their hole, pipe in mouth, and she amused herself by mimicking Jos to them as she munched her cold bread and sausage and took draughts of her favorite brandy and water.

Jos walked over to Dobbin's lodgings with great solemnity, and there imparted to him the affecting history with which he had just been made acquainted, without, however, mentioning the play business of the night before. And the two gentlemen were laying their heads together and consulting as to the best means of being useful to Mrs. Becky while she was finishing her interrupted déjeuner à la fourchette.

How was it that she had come to that little town? How was it that she had no friends and was wandering about alone? Little boys at school are taught in their earliest Latin book that the path of Avernus is very easy of descent. Let us skip over the interval in the history of her downward progress. She was not worse now than she had been in the days of her prosperity—only a little down on her luck.

As for Mrs. Amelia, she was a woman of such a soft and foolish disposition that when she heard of anybody unhappy, her heart straightway melted toward the sufferer; and as she had never thought or done anything mortally guilty herself, she had not that abhorrence for wickedness which distinguishes moralists much more knowing. If she spoiled everybody who came near her with kindness and compliments, if she begged pardon of all her servants for troubling them to answer the bell, if she apologized to a shopboy who showed her a piece of silk or made a curtsy to a street-sweeper with a complimentary remark upon the elegant state of his crossing—and she was almost capable of every one of these follies—the notion that an old acquaintance was miserable was sure to soften her heart, nor would she hear of anybody's being deservedly unhappy. A world under such legislation as hers would not be a very orderly place of abode, but there are not many women, at least not of the rulers, who are of her sort. This lady I believe would have abolished all jails, punishments, handcuffs, whippings, poverty, sickness, hunger, in the world, and was such a mean-spirited creature that—we are obliged to confess it—she could even forget a mortal injury.

When the Major heard from Jos of the sentimental adventure which had just befallen the latter, he was not, it must be owned, nearly as much interested as the gentleman from Bengal. On the contrary, his excitement was quite the reverse from a pleasurable one. He made use of a brief but improper expression regarding a poor woman in distress, saying, in fact, "The little minx, has she come to light again?" He never had the slightest liking for her, but had heartily mistrusted her from the very first moment when her green eyes had looked at and turned away from his own.

"That little devil brings mischief wherever she goes," the Major said disrespectfully. "Who knows what sort of life she has been leading? And what business has she here abroad and alone? Don't tell me about persecutors and

enemies—an honest woman always has friends, and never is separated from her family. Why has she left her husband? He may have been disreputable and wicked, as you say. He always was. I remember the confounded blackleg, and the way in which he used to cheat and hoodwink poor George. Wasn't there a scandal about their separation? I think I heard something," cried out Major Dobbin, who did not care much about gossip, and whom Jos tried in vain to convince that Mrs. Becky was in all respects a most injured and virtuous female.

"Well, well, let's ask Mrs. George," said that arch diplomatist of a Major. "Only let us go and consult *her*. I suppose you will allow that *she* is a good judge at any rate, and knows what is right in such matters."

"Hm! Emmy is very well," said Jos, who did not happen to be in love with his sister.

"Very well? By gad, sir, she's the finest lady I ever met in my life," bounced out the Major. "I say at once let's go and ask if this woman ought to be visited or not—I will be content with her verdict." Now this odious, artful rogue of a Major was thinking in his own mind that he was sure of his case. Emmy, he remembered, was at one time cruelly and deservedly jealous of Rebecca, never mentioned her name but with a shrinking and terror. "A jealous woman never forgives," thought Dobbin, and so the pair went across the street to Mrs. George's house, where she was contentedly warbling at a music lesson with Madame Strumpff.

When that lady took her leave, Jos opened the business with his usual pomp of words. "Amelia, my dear," said he, "I have just had the most extraordinary—yes—God bless my soul! the most extraordinary adventure—an old friend—yes, a most interesting old friend of yours, and I may say in old times, has just arrived here, and I should like you to see her."

"Her!" said Amelia. "Who is it? Major Dobbin, if you please not to break my scissors." The Major was twirling them round by the little chain from which they sometimes hung to their lady's waist, and was thereby endangering his own eye.

"It is a woman whom I dislike very much," said the Major doggedly, "and whom you have no cause to love."

"It is Rebecca, I'm sure it is Rebecca," Amelia said, blushing and being very much agitated.

"You are right, you always are," Dobbin answered. Brussels, Waterloo, old, old times, griefs, pangs, remembrances, rushed back into Amelia's gentle heart and caused a cruel agitation there.

"Don't let me see her," Emmy continued. "I couldn't see her."

"I told you so," Dobbin said to Jos.

"She is very unhappy, and—and that sort of thing," Jos urged. "She is very poor and unprotected, and has been ill—exceedingly ill—and that scoundrel of a husband has deserted her."

"Ah!" said Amelia.

"She hasn't a friend in the world," Jos went on, not undexterously, "and she said she thought she might trust in you. She's so miserable, Emmy. She

has been almost mad with grief. Her story quite affected me—'pon my word and honor, it did—never was such cruel persecution borne so angelically, I may say. Her family has been most cruel to her."

"Poor creature!" Amelia said.

"And if she can get no friend, she says she thinks she'll die," Jos proceeded in a low, tremulous voice. "God bless my soul! Do you know that she tried to kill herself? She carries laudanum with her—I saw the bottle in her room—such a miserable little room, at a third-rate house, the Elephant, up in the roof at the top of all. I went there."

This did not seem to affect Emmy. She even smiled a little. Perhaps she figured Jos to herself panting up the stair.

"She's beside herself with grief," he resumed. "The agonies that woman has endured are quite frightful to hear of. She had a little boy, of the same age as Georgy."

"Yes, yes, I think I remember," Emmy remarked. "Well?"

"The most beautiful child ever seen," Jos said, who was very fat, and easily moved, and had been touched by the story Becky told, "a perfect angel, who adored his mother. The ruffians tore him shrieking out of her arms, and have never allowed him to see her."

"Dear Joseph," Emmy cried out, starting up at once, "let us go and see her this minute." And she ran into her adjoining bedchamber, tied on her bonnet in a flutter, came out with her shawl on her arm, and ordered Dobbin to follow.

He went and put her shawl—it was a white Cashmere, consigned to her by the Major himself from India—over her shoulders. He saw there was nothing for it but to obey, and she put her hand into his arm, and they went away.

"It is number 92, up four pair of stairs," Jos said, perhaps not very willing to ascend the steps again, but he placed himself in the window of his drawing-room, which commands the place on which the Elephant stands, and saw the pair marching through the market.

It was as well that Becky saw them too from her garret, for she and the two students were chattering and laughing there. They had been joking about the appearance of Becky's grandpapa, whose arrival and departure they had witnessed. But she had time to dismiss them and have her little room clear before the landlord of the Elephant, who knew that Mrs. Osborne was a great favorite at the Serene Court, and respected her accordingly, led the way up the stairs to the roof story, encouraging *Miladi* and the *Herr Major* as they achieved the ascent.

"Gracious lady, gracious lady!" said the landlord, knocking at Becky's door. He had called her madame the day before, and was by no means courteous to her.

"Who is it?" Becky said, putting out her head, and she gave a little scream. There stood Emmy in a tremble, and Dobbin, the tall Major, with his cane.

He stood still watching, and very much interested at the scene, but Emmy sprang forward with open arms toward Rebecca, and forgave her at that

moment, and embraced her and kissed her with all her heart. Ah, poor wretch when was your lip pressed before by such pure kisses?

CHAPTER LXVI

Frankness and kindness like Amelia's were likely to touch even such a hard ened little reprobate as Becky. She returned Emmy's caresses and kin speeches with something very like gratitude, and an emotion which, if it wa not lasting, for a moment was almost genuine. That was a lucky stroke of her about the child "torn from her arms shrieking." It was by that harrowing mis fortune that Becky had won her friend back, and it was one of the very firs points, we may be certain, upon which our poor simple little Emmy bega to talk to her new-found acquaintance.

"And so they took your darling child from you?" our simpleton cried out "Oh, Rebecca, my poor dear suffering friend, I know what it is to lose a boy and to feel for those who have lost one. But please Heaven yours will be re stored to you, as a merciful, merciful Providence has brought me back mine.

"The child, my child? Oh, yes, my agonies were frightful," Becky owned not perhaps without a twinge of conscience. It jarred upon her to be obliged to commence instantly to tell lies in reply to so much confidence and sim plicity. But that is the misfortune of beginning with this kind of forgery When one fib becomes due, as it were, you must forge another to take up th old acceptance, and so the stock of your lies in circulation inevitably multi plies, and the danger of detection increases every day.

"My agonies," Becky continued, "were terrible (I hope she won't sit dow on the bottle) when they took him away from me. I thought I should die but I fortunately had a brain fever, during which my doctor gave me up and—and I recovered, and—and here I am, poor and friendless."

"How old is he?" Emmy asked.

"Eleven," said Becky.

"Eleven!" cried the other. "Why, he was born the same year with Georgy who is——"

"I know, I know," Becky cried out, who had in fact quite forgotten all abou little Rawdon's age. "Grief has made me forget so many things, deares Amelia. I am very much changed, half-wild sometimes. He was eleven whe they took him away from me. Bless his sweet face. I have never seen it again.

"Was he fair or dark?" went on that absurd little Emmy. "Show me hi hair."

Becky almost laughed at her simplicity. "Not today, love—some other time when my trunks arrive from Leipsic, whence I came to this place—and a litt drawing of him, which I made in happy days."

"Poor Becky, poor Becky!" said Emmy. "How thankful, how thankful ought to be"—though I doubt whether that practice of piety inculcated upo us by our womankind in early youth, namely, to be thankful because we ar

better off than somebody else, be a very rational religious exercise—and then she began to think, as usual, how her son was the handsomest, the best, and the cleverest boy in the whole world.

"You will see my Georgy," was the best thing Emmy could think of to console Becky. If anything could make her comfortable, that would.

And so the two women continued talking for an hour or more, during which Becky had the opportunity of giving her new friend a full and complete version of her private history. She showed how her marriage with Rawdon Crawley had always been viewed by the family with feelings of the utmost hostility; how her sister-in-law (an artful woman) had poisoned her husband's mind against her; how he had formed odious connections which had estranged his affections from her; how she had borne everything—poverty, neglect, coldness from the being whom she most loved—and all for the sake of her child; how, finally, and by the most flagrant outrage, she had been driven into demanding a separation from her husband when the wretch did not scruple to ask that she should sacrifice her own fair fame so that he might procure advancement through the means of a very great and powerful but unprincipled man—the Marquis of Steyne, indeed. The atrocious monster!

This part of her eventful history Becky gave with the utmost feminine delicacy, and the most indignant virtue. Forced to fly her husband's roof by this insult, the coward had pursued his revenge by taking her child from her. And thus Becky said she was a wanderer, poor, unprotected, friendless, and wretched.

Emmy received this story, which was told at some length, as those persons who are acquainted with her character may imagine that she would. She quivered with indignation at the account of the conduct of the miserable Rawdon and the unprincipled Steyne. Her eyes made notes of admiration for every one of the sentences in which Becky described the persecutions of her aristocratic relatives, and the falling-away of her husband. (Becky did not abuse him. She spoke rather in sorrow than in anger. She had loved him only too fondly, and was he not the father of her boy?) And as for the separation scene from the child, while Becky was reciting it Emmy retired altogether behind her pocket handkerchief, so that the consummate little tragedian must have been charmed to see the effect which her performance produced on her audience.

While the ladies were carrying on their conversation, Amelia's constant escort, the Major (who of course did not wish to interrupt their conference, and found himself rather tired of creaking about the narrow stair passage of which the roof brushed the nap from his hat) descended to the ground floor of the house and into the great room common to all the frequenters of the Elephant, out of which the stair led. This apartment is always in a fume of smoke, and liberally sprinkled with beer. On a dirty table stand scores of corresponding brass candlesticks with tallow candles for the lodgers, whose keys hang up in rows over the candles. Emmy had passed blushing through the room anon, where all sorts of people were collected: Tyrolese glove-sellers and Danubian linen merchants with their packs; students recruiting

themselves with *butterbrods* and meat; idlers playing cards or dominoes c the sloppy, beery tables; tumblers refreshing during the cessation of their pe formances—in a word, all the *fumum* and *strepitus* of a German inn in fai time. The waiter brought the Major a mug of beer as a matter of course, ar he took out a cigar and amused himself with that pernicious vegetable and newspaper until his charge should come down to claim him.

Max and Fritz came presently downstairs, their caps on one side, their spu jingling, their pipes splendid with coats of arms and full-blown tassels, ar they hung up the key of No. 90 on the board and called for the ration *butterbrod* and beer. The pair sat down by the Major and fell into a convers tion of which he could not help hearing somewhat. It was mainly abo "Fuchs" and "Philister," and duels and drinking bouts at the neighborir University of Schoppenhausen, from which renowned seat of learning the had just come in the *Eilwagen*, with Becky, as it appeared, by their side ar in order to be present at the bridal fêtes at Pumpernickel.

"The little *Engländerin* seems to be *en bays de gonnoissance*," said Ma who knew the French language, to Fritz, his comrade. "After the fat granc father went away, there came a pretty little compatriot. I heard them cha tering and whimpering together in the little woman's chamber."

"We must take the tickets for her concert," Fritz said. "Hast thou an money, Max?"

"Bah," said the other, "the concert is a concert *in nubibus*. Hans said tha she advertised one at Leipsic, and the Burschen took many tickets. But sh went off without singing. She said in the coach yesterday that her piani had fallen ill at Dresden. She cannot sing, it is my belief, her voice is a cracked as thine, O thou beer-soaking renowner!"

"It is cracked. *I* hear her trying out of her window a *schrecklich* Englis ballad called 'De Rose upon de Balgony.'"

"*Saufen* and *singen* go not together," observed Fritz with the red nos who evidently preferred the former amusement. "No, thou shalt take nor of her tickets. She won money at the trente-et-quarante last night. I saw her she made a little English boy play for her. We will spend thy money there o at the theater, or we will treat her to French wine or cognac in the Aureliu Garden, but the tickets we will not buy. What sayest thou? Yet another mu of beer?" And one and another successively having buried their blond whisk ers in the mawkish draught, curled them and swaggered off into the fai

The Major, who had seen the key of No. 90 put up on its hook and ha heard the conversation of the two young university bloods, was not at a los to understand that their talk related to Becky. "The little devil is at her ol tricks," he thought, and he smiled as he recalled old days, when he had wit nessed the desperate flirtation with Jos and the ludicrous end of that adventure He and George had often laughed over it subsequently, and until a few week after George's marriage, when he also was caught in the little Circe's toils, an had an understanding with her which his comrade certainly suspected, bu preferred to ignore. William was too much hurt or ashamed to ask to fathon that disgraceful mystery, although once, and evidently with remorse on his

mind, George had alluded to it. It was on the morning of Waterloo, as the young men stood together in front of their line surveying the black masses of Frenchmen who crowned the opposite heights, and as the rain was coming down.

"I have been mixing in a foolish intrigue with a woman," George said. "I am glad we were marched away. If I drop, I hope Emmy will never know of that business. I wish to God it had never been begun!" And William was pleased to think, and had more than once soothed poor George's widow with the narrative, that Osborne, after quitting his wife and after the action of Quatre-Bras, on the first day, spoke gravely and affectionately to his comrade of his father and his wife. On these facts, too, William had insisted very strongly in his conversations with the elder Osborne, and had thus been the means of reconciling the old gentleman to his son's memory just at the close of the elder man's life.

"And so this devil is still going on with her intrigues," thought William. "I wish she were a hundred miles from here. She brings mischief wherever she goes." And he was pursuing these forebodings and this uncomfortable train of thought, with his head between his hands and the Pumpernickel *Gazette* of last week unread under his nose, when somebody tapped his shoulder with a parasol and he looked up and saw Mrs. Amelia.

This woman had a way of tyrannizing over Major Dobbin (for the weakest of all people will domineer over somebody), and she ordered him about and patted him and made him fetch and carry just as if he was a great Newfoundland dog. He liked, so to speak, to jump into the water if she said "High, Dobbin!" and to trot behind her with her reticule in his mouth. This history has been written to very little purpose if the reader has not perceived that the Major was a spoony.

"Why did you not wait for me, sir, to escort me downstairs" she said, giving a little toss of her head and a most sarcastic curtsy.

"I couldn't stand up in the passage," he answered, with a comical deprecatory look, and, delighted to give her his arm and to take her out of the horrid smoky place, he would have walked off without even so much as remembering the waiter had not the young fellow run after him and stopped him on the threshold of the Elephant to make him pay for the beer which he had not consumed. Emmy laughed. She called him a naughty man, who wanted to run away in debt, and, in fact, made some jokes suitable to the occasion and the small beer. She was in high spirits and good humor, and tripped across the market place very briskly. She wanted to see Jos that instant. The Major laughed at the impetuous affection Mrs. Amelia exhibited, for in truth it was not very often that she wanted her brother "that instant."

They found the civilian in his saloon on the first floor. He had been pacing the room and biting his nails, and looking over the market place toward the Elephant a hundred times at least during the past hour while Emmy was closeted with her friend in the garret and the Major was beating the tattoo on the sloppy tables of the public room below, and he was, on his side too, very anxious to see Mrs. Osborne.

"Well?" said he.

"The poor dear creature, how she has suffered!" Emmy said.

"God bless my soul, yes," Jos said, wagging his head so that his cheeks quivered like jellies.

"She may have Payne's room, who can go upstairs," Emmy continued. Payne was a staid English maid and personal attendant upon Mrs. Osborne to whom the courier, as in duty bound, paid court, and whom Georgy used to "lark" dreadfully with accounts of German robbers and ghosts. She passed her time chiefly in grumbling, in ordering about her mistress, and in stating her intention to return the next morning to her native village of Clapham. "She may have Payne's room," Emmy said.

"Why, you don't mean to say you are going to have that woman into the *house?*" bounced out the Major, jumping up.

"Of course we are," said Amelia, in the most innocent way in the world. "Don't be angry and break the furniture, Major Dobbin. Of course we are going to have her here."

"Of course, my dear," Jos said.

"The poor creature, after all her sufferings," Emmy continued, "her horrid banker broken and run away, her husband—wicked wretch—having deserted her and taken her child away from her," (here she doubled her two little fists and held them in a most menacing attitude before her, so that the Major was charmed to see such a dauntless virago) "the poor dear thing! quite alone and absolutely forced to give lessons in singing to get her bread—and not have her here!"

"Take lessons, my dear Mrs. George," cried the Major, "but don't have her in the house. I implore you don't."

"Pooh," said Jos.

"You who are always good and kind—always used to be at any rate—I'm astonished at you, Major William," Amelia cried. "Why, what is the moment to help her but when she is so miserable? Now is the time to be of service to her. The oldest friend I ever had, and not—"

"She was not always your friend, Amelia," the Major said, for he was quite angry. This allusion was too much for Emmy, who, looking the Major almost fiercely in the face, said, "For shame, Major Dobbin!" and after having fired this shot, she walked out of the room with a most majestic air, and shut her own door briskly on herself and her outraged dignity.

"To allude to *that!*" she said when the door was closed. "Oh, it was cruel of him to remind me of it." And she looked up at George's picture, which hung there as usual, with the portrait of the boy underneath. "It was cruel of him. If I had forgiven it, ought he to have spoken? No. And it is from his own lips that I know how wicked and groundless my jealousy was, and that you were pure. Oh, yes, you were pure, my saint in Heaven!"

She paced the room trembling and indignant. She went and leaned on the chest of drawers over which the picture hung, and gazed and gazed at it. Its eyes seemed to look down on her with a reproach that deepened as she looked. The early dear, dear memories of that brief prime of love rushed

back upon her. The wound which years had scarcely cicatrized bled afresh and oh, how bitterly! She could not bear the reproaches of the husband there before her. It couldn't be. Never, never.

Poor Dobbin, poor old William! That unlucky word had undone the work of many a year—the long laborious edifice of a life of love and constancy, raised too upon what secret and hidden foundations wherein lay buried passions, uncounted struggles, unknown sacrifices—a little word was spoken, and down fell the fair palace of hope—one word, and away flew the bird which he had been trying all his life to lure!

William, though he saw by Amelia's looks that a great crisis had come, nevertheless continued to implore Sedley, in the most energetic terms, to beware of Rebecca, and he eagerly, almost frantically, adjured Jos not to receive her. He besought Mr. Sedley to inquire at least regarding her, told him how he had heard that she was in the company of gamblers and people of ill repute, pointed out what evil she had done in former days, how she and Crawley had misled poor George into ruin, how she was now parted from her husband by her own confession, and perhaps for good reason. What a dangerous companion she would be for his sister, who knew nothing of the affairs of the world! William implored Jos, with all the eloquence which he could bring to bear and a great deal more energy than this quiet gentleman was ordinarily in the habit of showing, to keep Rebecca out of his household.

Had he been less violent, or more dexterous, he might have succeeded in his supplications to Jos; but the civilian was not a little jealous of the airs of superiority which the Major constantly exhibited toward him, as he fancied (indeed, he had imparted his opinions to Mr. Kirsch, the courier, whose bills Major Dobbin checked on this journey, and who sided with his master), and he began a blustering speech about his competency to defend his own honor, his desire not to have his affairs meddled with, his intention, in fine, to rebel against the Major, when the colloquy—rather a long and stormy one—was put an end to in the simplest way possible; namely, by the arrival of Mrs. Becky, with a porter from the Elephant Hotel in charge of her very meager baggage.

She greeted her host with affectionate respect, and made a shrinking but amicable salutation to Major Dobbin, who, as her instinct assured her at once, was her enemy and had been speaking against her; and the bustle and clatter consequent upon her arrival brought Amelia out of her room. Emmy went up and embraced her guest with the greatest warmth, and took no notice of the Major except to fling him an angry look—the most unjust and scornful glance that had perhaps ever appeared in that poor little woman's face since she was born. But she had private reasons of her own, and was bent upon being angry with him. And Dobbin, indignant at the injustice, not at the defeat, went off, making her a bow quite as haughty as the killing curtsy with which the little woman chose to bid him farewell.

He being gone, Emmy was particularly lively and affectionate to Rebecca, and bustled about the apartments and installed her guest in her room with an eagerness and activity seldom exhibited by our placid little friend. But when

an act of injustice is to be done, especially by weak people, it is best that i should be done quickly, and Emmy thought she was displaying a great dea of firmness and proper feeling and veneration for the late Captain Osborn in her present behavior.

Georgy came in from the fêtes for dinnertime and found four covers lai as usual, but one of the places was occupied by a lady instead of by Majo Dobbin. "Hallo! Where's Dob?" the young gentleman asked with his usua simplicity of language. "Major Dobbin is dining out, I suppose," his mothe said, and drawing the boy to her, kissed him a great deal, and put his hair o his forehead, and introduced him to Mrs. Crawley. "This is my boy, Rebecca, Mrs. Osborne said—as much as to say "Can the world produce anythin like that?" Becky looked at him with rapture, and pressed his hand fondly "Dear boy!" she said. "He is just like my——" Emotion choked her furthe utterance, but Amelia understood as well as if she had spoken that Becky wa thinking of her own blessed child. However, the company of her friend con soled Mrs. Crawley, and she ate a very good dinner.

During the repast she had occasion to speak several times, when Georg eyed her and listened to her. At the dessert Emmy was gone out to superin tend further domestic arrangements, Jos was in his great chair dozing ove *Galignani*, Georgy and the new arrival sat close to each other, he had con tinued to look at her knowingly more than once, and at last he laid dow the nutcrackers.

"I say," said Georgy.

"What do you say?" Becky said, laughing.

"You're the lady I saw in the mask at the Rouge et Noir."

"Hush, you little sly creature," Becky said, taking up his hand and kissin it. "Your uncle was there, too, and Mamma mustn't know it."

"Oh no—not by no means," answered the little fellow.

"You see, we are quite good friends already," Becky said to Emmy, wh now re-entered, and it must be owned that Mrs. Osborne had introduced most judicious and amiable companion into her house.

William, in a state of great indignation, though still unaware of all th treason that was in store for him, walked across the town wildly until h fell upon the Secretary of Legation, Tapeworm, who invited him to dinne As they were discussing that meal, he took occasion to ask the Secretar whether he knew anything about a certain Mrs. Rawdon Crawley, who had he believed, made some noise in London; and then Tapeworm, who of cours knew all the London gossip and was besides a relative of Lady Gaunt, poure out into the astonished Major's ears such a history about Becky and her husban as astonished the querist—everything connected with Becky and her previou life passed under the record of the bitter diplomatist. He knew everything an a great deal besides, about all the world—in a word, he made the most astound ing revelations to the simplehearted Major. When Dobbin said that Mrs Osborne and Mr. Sedley had taken her into their house, Tapeworm burst int a peal of laughter which shocked the Major, and asked if they had not bette send into the prison and take in one or two of the gentlemen in shaved head

and yellow jackets who swept the streets of Pumpernickel, chained in pairs, to board and lodge, and act as tutor to that little scapegrace Georgy.

This information astonished and horrified the Major not a little. It had been agreed in the morning (before meeting with Rebecca) that Amelia should go to the Court ball that night. There would be the place where he should tell her. The Major went home and dressed himself in his uniform and repaired to Court, in hopes to see Mrs. Osborne. She never came. When he returned to his lodgings all the lights in the Sedley tenement were put out. He could not see her till the morning. I don't know what sort of a night's rest he had with this frightful secret in bed with him.

At the earliest convenient hour in the morning he sent his servant across the way with a note saying that he wished very particularly to speak with her. A message came back to say that Mrs. Osborne was exceedingly unwell, and was keeping her room.

She too had been awake all that night. She had been thinking of a thing which had agitated her mind a hundred times before. A hundred times on the point of yielding, she had shrunk back from a sacrifice which she felt was too much for her. She couldn't, in spite of his love and constancy, and her own acknowledged regard, respect, and gratitude. What are benefits? What are constancy or merit? One curl of a girl's ringlet, one hair of a whisker, will turn the scale against them all in a minute. They did not weigh with Emmy more than with other women. She had tried them, wanted to make them pass, could not, and the pitiless little woman had found a pretext, and determined to be free.

When at length in the afternoon the Major gained admission to Amelia, instead of the cordial and affectionate greeting to which he had been accustomed now for many a long day he received the salutation of a curtsy and of a little gloved hand retracted the moment after it was accorded to him.

Rebecca too was in the room, and advanced to meet him with a smile and an extended hand. Dobbin drew back rather confusedly. "I—I beg your pardon, ma'am," he said. "I am bound to tell you that it is not as your friend that I am come here now."

"Pooh! Damn, don't let us have this sort of thing!" Jos cried out, alarmed and anxious to get rid of a scene.

"I wonder what Major Dobbin has to say against Rebecca," Amelia said in a low, clear voice with a slight quaver in it, and a very determined look about the eyes.

"I will *not* have this sort of thing in my house," Jos interposed. "I say, I will not have it, and Dobbin, I beg, sir, you'll stop it." And he looked round trembling and turning very red, and gave a great puff and made for his door.

"Dear friend," Rebecca said with angelic sweetness, "do hear what Major Dobbin has to say against me."

"I will *not* hear it, I say," squeaked out Jos at the top of his voice, and gathering up his dressing-gown, he was gone.

"We are only two women," Amelia said. "You can speak now, sir."

"This manner toward me is one which scarce becomes you, Amelia," the

Major answered haughtily, "nor I believe am I guilty of habitual harshn to women. It is not a pleasure to me to do the duty which I am come to d

"Pray proceed with it quickly, if you please, Major Dobbin," said Amel who was more and more in a pet. The expression of Dobbin's face as s spoke in this imperious manner was not pleasant.

"I came to say—and as you stay, Mrs. Crawley, I must say it in your pr ence—that I think you—you ought not to form a member of the family of r friends. A lady who is separated from her husband, who travels not under H own name, who frequents public gaming tables——"

"It was to the ball I went," cried out Becky.

"—is not a fit companion for Mrs. Osborne and her son," Dobbin went c "and I may add that there are people here who know you, and who prof to know that regarding your conduct about which I don't even wish to spe before—before Mrs. Osborne."

"Yours is a very modest and convenient sort of calumny, Major Dobbi Rebecca said. "You leave me under the weight of an accusation which, aft all, is unsaid. What is it? Is it unfaithfulness to my husband? I scorn it, a defy anybody to prove it—I defy you, I say. My honor is as untouched as th of the bitterest enemy who ever maligned me. Is it of being poor, forsake wretched, that you accuse me? Yes, I am guilty of those faults, and punish for them every day. Let me go, Emmy. It is only to suppose that I have n met you, and I am no worse today than I was yesterday. It is only to suppo that the night is over and the poor wanderer is on her way. Don't you r member the song we used to sing in old, dear old days? I have been wanderi ever since then—a poor castaway, scorned for being miserable, and insult because I am alone. Let me go. My stay here interferes with the plans of th gentleman."

"Indeed, it does, madam," said the Major. "If I have any authority in th house——"

"Authority—none!" broke out Amelia. "Rebecca, you stay with me. *I* wo desert you because you have been persecuted, or insult you because—becau Major Dobbin chooses to do so. Come away, dear." And the two wom made toward the door.

William opened it. As they were going out, however, he took Ameli hand, and said, "Will you stay a moment and speak to me?"

"He wishes to speak to you away from me," said Becky, looking like martyr. Amelia gripped her hand in reply.

"Upon my honor it is not about you that I am going to speak," Dobbin sa "Come back, Amelia." And she came. Dobbin bowed to Mrs. Crawley as shut the door upon her. Amelia looked at him leaning against the glass, h face and her lips were quite white.

"I was confused when I spoke just now," the Major said after a pause, "a I misused the word authority."

"You did," said Amelia, with her teeth chattering.

"At least I have claims to be heard," Dobbin continued.

"It is generous to remind me of our obligations to you," the woman answered.

"The claims, I mean, are those left me by George's father," William said.

"Yes, and you insulted his memory. You did yesterday. You know you did. And I will never forgive you. Never!" said Amelia. She shot out each little sentence in a tremor of emotion.

"You don't mean that, Amelia?" William said, sadly. "You don't mean that these words, uttered in a hurried moment, are to weigh against a whole life's devotion? I think that George's memory has not been injured by the way in which I have dealt with it, and if we are come to bandying reproaches, I at least merit none from his widow and the mother of his son. Reflect, afterward when—when you are at leisure, and your conscience will withdraw this accusation. It does even now." Amelia held down her head.

"It is not that speech of yesterday," he continued, "which moves you. That is but the pretext, Amelia, or I have loved you and watched you for fifteen years in vain. Have I not learned in that time to read all your feelings and look into your thoughts? I know what your heart is capable of. It can cling faithfully to a recollection, and cherish a fancy, but it can't feel such an attachment as mine deserves to mate with, and such as I would have won from a woman more generous than you. No, you are not worthy of the love which I have devoted to you. I knew all along that the prize I had set my life on was not worth the winning, that I was a fool, with fond fancies, too, bartering away my all of truth and ardor against your little feeble remnant of love. I will bargain no more, I withdraw. I find no fault with you. You are very good-natured, and have done your best, but you couldn't—you couldn't reach up to the height of the attachment which I bore you, and which a loftier soul than yours might have been proud to share. Good-by, Amelia! I have watched your struggle. Let it end. We are both weary of it."

Amelia stood scared and silent as William thus suddenly broke the chain by which she held him, and declared his independence and superiority. He had placed himself at her feet so long that the poor little woman had been accustomed to trample upon him. She didn't wish to marry him, but she wished to keep him. She wished to give him nothing, but that he should give all. It is a bargain not unfrequently levied in love.

William's sally had quite broken and cast her down. *Her* assault was long since over and beaten back.

"Am I to understand, then—that you are going—away—William?" she said.

He gave a sad laugh. "I went once before," he said, "and came back after twelve years. We were young then, Amelia. Good-by. I have spent enough of my life at this play."

While they had been talking, the door into Mrs. Osborne's room had opened ever so little. Indeed Becky had kept a hold of the handle, and had turned it on the instant when Dobbin quitted it, and she heard every word of the conversation that had passed between these two. "What a noble heart that man has," she thought, "and how shamefully that woman plays with it!" She admired Dobbin, she bore him no rancor for the part he had taken against her.

It was an open move in the game, and played fairly. "Ah," she thought, "if I could have had such a husband as that—a man with a heart and brains too! I would not have minded his large feet." And running into her room, she absolutely bethought herself of something, and wrote him a note beseeching him to stop for a few days—not to think of going—and that she could serve him with A.

The parting was over. Once more poor William walked to the door and was gone, and the little widow, the author of all this work, had her will and had won her victory, and was left to enjoy it as she best might. Let the ladies envy her triumph.

At the romantic hour of dinner, Mr. Georgy made his appearance, and again remarked the absence of "old Dob." The meal was eaten in silence by the party, Jos's appetite not being diminished, but Emmy taking nothing at all.

After the meal, Georgy was lolling in the cushions of the old window, a large window with three sides of glass abutting from the gable and commanding on one side the market place where the Elephant is, his mother being busy hard by, when he remarked symptoms of movement at the Major's house on the other side of the street.

"Hullo!" said he. "There's Dob's trap—they are bringing it out of the courtyard." The "trap" in question was a carriage which the Major had bought for six pounds sterling, and about which they used to rally him a good deal.

Emmy gave a little start, but said nothing.

"Hullo!" Georgy continued. "There's Francis coming out with the portmanteaus, and Kunz, the one-eyed postilion, coming down the market with three *schimmels*. Look at his boots and yellow jacket—ain't he a rum one? Why—they're putting the horses to Dob's carriage. Is he going anywhere?"

"Yes," said Emmy, "he is going on a journey."

"Going on a journey! And when is he coming back?"

"He is—not coming back," answered Emmy.

"Not coming back!" cried out Georgy, jumping up. "Stay here, sir," roared out Jos. "Stay, Georgy," said his mother, with a very sad face. The boy stopped, kicked about the room, jumped up and down from the window seat with his knees, and showed every symptom of uneasiness and curiosity.

The horses were put to. The baggage was strapped on. Francis came out with his master's sword, cane, and umbrella tied up together and laid them in the well, and his desk and old tin cocked-hat case, which he placed under the seat. Francis brought out the stained old blue cloak lined with red camlet which had wrapped the owner up any time these fifteen years and had *manchen Sturm erlebt*, as a favorite song of those days said. It had been new for the campaign of Waterloo, and had covered George and William after the night of Quatre-Bras.

Old Burcke, the landlord of the lodgings, came out, then Francis with more packages—final packages—then Major William. Burcke wanted to kiss him. The Major was adored by all people with whom he had to do. It was with difficulty he could escape from this demonstration of attachment.

"By Jove, I *will go!*" screamed out George. "Give him this," said Becky, quite interested, and put a paper into the boy's hand. He had rushed down the stairs and flung across the street in a minute—the yellow postilion was cracking his whip gently.

William had got into the carriage, released from the embraces of his landlord. George bounded in afterward and flung his arms round the Major's neck (as they saw from the window), and began asking him multiplied questions. Then he felt in his waistcoat pocket and gave him a note. William seized at it rather eagerly, he opened it tremblingly, but instantly his countenance changed and he tore the paper in two and dropped it out of the carriage. He kissed Georgy on the head and the boy got out, doubling his fists into his eyes, with the aid of Francis. He lingered with his hand on the panel. Fort Schwager! The yellow postilion cracked his whip prodigiously, up sprung Francis to the box, away went the *schimmels*, and Dobbin with his head on his breast. He never looked up as they passed under Amelia's window, and Georgy, left alone in the street, burst out crying in the face of all the crowd.

Emmy's maid heard him howling again during the night, and brought him some preserved apricots to console him. She mingled her lamentations with his. All the poor, all the humble, all honest folks, all good men who knew him, loved that kindhearted and simple gentleman.

As for Emmy, had she not done her duty? She had her picture of George for a consolation.

CHAPTER LXVII

Whatever Becky's private plan might be by which Dobbin's true love was to be crowned with success, the little woman thought that the secret might keep, and indeed being by no means so much interested about anybody's welfare as about her own, she had a great number of things pertaining to herself to consider, and which concerned her a great deal more than Major Dobbin's happiness in this life.

She found herself suddenly and unexpectedly in snug, comfortable quarters, surrounded by friends, kindness, and good-natured simple people such as she had not met with for many a long day; and wanderer as she was by force and inclination, there were moments when rest was pleasant to her. As the most hardened Arab that ever careered across the desert over the hump of a dromedary likes to repose sometimes under the date trees by the water, or to come into the cities, walk into the bazaars, refresh himself in the baths, and say his prayers in the mosques before he goes out again marauding, Jos's tents and pilau were pleasant to this little Ishmaelite. She picketed her steed, hung up her weapons, and warmed herself comfortably by his fire. The halt in that roving, restless life was inexpressibly soothing and pleasant to her.

So, pleased herself, she tried with all her might to please everybody, and we know that she was eminent and successful as a practitioner in the art of giving pleasure. As for Jos, even in that little interview in the garret at the

Elephant Inn she had found means to win back a great deal of his goodwill. In the course of a week the civilian was her sworn slave and frantic admirer. He didn't go to sleep after dinner, as his custom was in the much less lively society of Amelia. He drove out with Becky in his open carriage. He asked little parties and invented festivities to do her honor.

Tapeworm, the chargé d'affaires who had abused her so cruelly, came to dine with Jos, and then came every day to pay his respects to Becky. Poor Emmy, who was never very talkative, and more glum and silent than ever after Dobbin's departure, was quite forgotten when this superior genius made her appearance. The French Minister was as much charmed with her as his English rival. The German ladies, never particularly squeamish as regards morals, especially in English people, were delighted with the cleverness and wit of Mrs. Osborne's charming friend; and though she did not ask to go to Court, yet the most august and transparent personages there heard of her fascinations, and were quite curious to know her. When it became known that she was noble, of an ancient English family—that her husband was a Colonel of the guard, Excellenz, and Governor of an island, only separated from his lady by one of those trifling differences which are of little account in a country where *Werther* is still read and the *Wahlverwandschaften* of Goethe is considered an edifying moral book—nobody thought of refusing to receive her in the very highest society of the little Duchy, and the ladies were even more ready to call her *du*, and to swear eternal friendship for her, than they had been to bestow the same inestimable benefits upon Amelia.

Love and liberty are interpreted by those simple Germans in a way which honest folks in Yorkshire and Somersetshire little understand, and a lady might, in some philosophic and civilized towns, be divorced ever so many times from her respective husbands and keep her character in society. Jos's house never was so pleasant since he had a house of his own as Rebecca caused it to be. She sang, she played, she laughed, she talked in two or three languages, she brought everybody to the house, and she made Jos believe that it was his own great social talents and wit which gathered the society of the place round about him.

As for Emmy, who found herself not in the least mistress of her own house—except when the bills were to be paid—Becky soon discovered the way to soothe and please her. She talked to her perpetually about Major Dobbin sent about his business, and made no scruples of declaring her admiration for that excellent, high-minded gentleman, and of telling Emmy that she had behaved most cruelly regarding him. Emmy defended her conduct, and showed that it was dictated only by the purest religious principles, that a woman once, etc., and to such an angel as him whom she had the good fortune to marry, was married forever. But she had no objection to hear the Major praised as much as ever Becky chose to praise him, and indeed brought the conversation round to the Dobbin subject a score of times every day.

Means were easily found to win the favor of Georgy and the servants. Amelia's maid, it has been said, was heart and soul in favor of the generous Major. Having at first disliked Becky for being the means of dismissing him

from the presence of her mistress, she was reconciled to Mrs. Crawley subsequently because the latter became William's most ardent admirer and champion. And in those nightly conclaves in which the two ladies indulged after their parties and while Miss Payne was "brushing their 'airs," as she called the yellow locks of the one and the soft brown tresses of the other, this girl always put in her word for that dear good gentleman Major Dobbin. Her advocacy did not make Amelia angry any more than Rebecca's admiration of him. She made George write to him constantly, and persisted in sending Mamma's kind love in a postscript. And as she looked at her husband's portrait of nights, it no longer reproached her—perhaps she reproached it, now William was gone.

Emmy was not very happy after her heroic sacrifice. She was very *distraite*, nervous, silent, and ill to please. The family had never known her so peevish. She grew pale and ill. She used to try to sing certain songs ("*Einsam bin ich nicht alleine*" was one of them, that tender love song of Weber's which, in old-fashioned days, young ladies, and when you were scarcely born, showed that those who lived before you knew too how to love and to sing)—certain songs, I say, to which the Major was partial, and as she warbled them in the twilight in the drawing-room, she would break off in the midst of the song and walk into her neighboring apartment and there, no doubt, take refuge in the miniature of her husband.

Not caring for society, and moping there a great deal, Emmy's chief pleasure in the summer evenings was to take long walks with Georgy (during which Rebecca was left to the society of Mr. Joseph), and then the mother and son used to talk about the Major in a way which even made the boy smile. She told him that she thought Major William was the best man in all the world, the gentlest and the kindest, the bravest and the humblest. Over and over again she told him how they owed everything which they possessed in the world to that kind friend's benevolent care of them—how he had befriended them all through their poverty and misfortunes, watched over them when nobody cared for them, how all his comrades admired him though he never spoke of his own gallant actions, how Georgy's father trusted him beyond all other men, and had been constantly befriended by the good William. "Why, when your papa was a little boy," she said, "he often told me that it was William who befriended him against a tyrant at the school where they were, and their friendship never ceased from that day until the last, when your dear father fell."

"Did Dobbin kill the man who killed Papa?" Georgy said. "I'm sure he did, or he would if he could have caught him, wouldn't he, Mother? When I'm in the army, won't I hate the French!—That's all."

In such colloquies the mother and the child passed a great deal of their time together. The artless woman had made a confidant of the boy. He was as much William's friend as everybody else who knew him well.

By-the-way, Mrs. Becky, not to be behindhand in sentiment, had got a miniature to hang up in her room, to the surprise and amusement of most people and the delight of the original, who was no other than our friend

Jos. On her first coming to favor the Sedleys with a visit, the little woman, who had arrived with a remarkably small shabby kit, was perhaps ashamed of the meanness of her trunks and bandboxes, and often spoke with great respect about her baggage left behind at Leipsic, which she must have from that city. When a traveler talks to you perpetually about the splendor of his luggage which he does not happen to have with him—my son, beware of that traveler! He is, ten to one, an impostor.

Neither Jos nor Emmy knew this important maxim. It seemed to them of no consequence whether Becky had a quantity of very fine clothes in invisible trunks, but as her present supply was exceedingly shabby, Emmy supplied her out of her own stores, or took her to the best milliner in the town and there fitted her out.

It was no more torn collars now, I promise you, and faded silk trailing off at the shoulder. Becky changed her habits with her situation in life—the rouge pot was suspended, another excitement to which she had accustomed herself was also put aside, or at least only indulged in in privacy, as when she was prevailed on by Jos of a summer evening, Emmy and the boy being absent on their walks, to take a little spirit and water. But if she did not indulge, the courier did. That rascal Kirsch could not be kept from the bottle, nor could he tell how much he took when he applied to it. He was sometimes surprised himself at the way in which Mr. Sedley's cognac diminished. Well, well, this is a painful subject. Becky did not very likely indulge so much as she used before she entered a decorous family.

At last the much-bragged-about boxes arrived from Leipsic—three of them, not by any means large or splendid, nor did Becky appear to take out any sort of dresses or ornaments from the boxes when they did arrive. But out of one which contained a mass of her papers (it was that very box which Rawdon Crawley had ransacked in his furious hunt for Becky's concealed money), she took a picture with great glee, which she pinned up in her room, and to which she introduced Jos. It was the portrait of a gentleman in pencil, his face having the advantage of being painted up in pink. He was riding on an elephant away from some coconut trees and a pagoda. It was an Eastern scene.

"God bless my soul, it is my portrait!" Jos cried out. It was he indeed, blooming in youth and beauty in a nankeen jacket of the cut of 1804. It was the old picture that used to hang up in Russell Square.

"I bought it," said Becky in a voice trembling with emotion. "I went to see if I could be of any use to my kind friends. I have never parted with that picture—I never will."

"Won't you?" Jos cried with a look of unutterable rapture and satisfaction. "Did you really now value it for my sake?"

"You know I did well enough," said Becky, "but why speak—why think—why look back! It is too late now!"

That evening's conversation was delicious for Jos. Emmy only came in to go to bed very tired and unwell. Jos and his fair guest had a charming tête-á tête, and his sister could hear, as she lay awake in her adjoining chamber,

Rebecca singing over to Jos the old songs of 1815. He did not sleep, for a wonder, that night any more than Amelia.

It was June, and by consequence high season in London. Jos, who read the incomparable *Galignani* (the exile's best friend) through every day, used to favor the ladies with extracts from his paper during their breakfast. Every week in this paper there is a full account of military movements, in which Jos, as a man who had seen service, was especially interested. On one occasion he read out: "Arrival of the —th regiment. Gravesend, June 20. The *Ramchunder* East Indiaman came into the river this morning having on board 14 officers and 132 rank and file of this gallant corps. They have been absent from England fourteen years, having been embarked the year after Waterloo, in which glorious conflict they took an active part, and having subsequently distinguished themselves in the Burmese war. The veteran Colonel, Sir Michael O'Dowd, K.C.B., with his lady and sister, landed here yesterday, with Captains Posky, Stubble, Macraw, Maloney; Lieutenants Smith, Jones, Thompson, F. Thompson; Ensigns Hicks and Grady; the band on the pier playing the national anthem and the crowd loudly cheering the gallant veterans as they went into Wayte's Hotel, where a sumptuous banquet was provided for the defenders of Old England. During the repast, which we need not say was served up in Wayte's best style, the cheering continued so enthusiastically that Lady O'Dowd and the Colonel came forward to the balcony and drank the healths of their fellow countrymen in a bumper of Wayte's best claret."

On a second occasion Jos read a brief announcement—Major Dobbin had joined the —th regiment at Chatham, and subsequently he promulgated accounts of the presentations at the drawing-room of Colonel Sir Michael O'Dowd, K.C.B., Lady O'Dowd (by Mrs. Molloy Malony of Ballymalony), and Miss Glorvina O'Dowd (by Lady O'Dowd). Almost directly after this, Dobbin's name appeared among the Lieutenant Colonels; for old Marshal Tiptoff had died during the passage of the —th from Madras, and the sovereign was pleased to advance Colonel Sir Michael O'Dowd to the rank of Major General on his return to England, with an intimation that he should be Colonel of the distinguished regiment which he had so long commanded.

Amelia had been made aware of some of these movements. The correspondence between George and his guardian had not ceased by any means. William had even written once or twice to her since his departure, but in a manner so unconstrainedly cold that the poor woman felt now in her turn that she had lost her power over him, and that, as he had said, he was free. He had left her, and she was wretched. The memory of his almost countless services, and lofty and affectionate regard, now presented itself to her and rebuked her day and night. She brooded over those recollections according to her wont, saw the purity and beauty of the affection with which she had trifled, and reproached herself for having flung away such a treasure.

It was gone indeed. William had spent it all out. He loved her no more, he thought, as he had loved her. He never could again. That sort of regard which he had proffered to her for so many faithful years can't be flung down and shattered and mended so as to show no scars. The little heedless tyrant

had so destroyed it. No, William thought again and again: "It was myself I deluded, and persisted in cajoling. Had she been worthy of the love I gave her, she would have returned it long ago. It was a fond mistake. Isn't the whole course of life made up of such? And suppose I had won her, should I not have been disenchanted the day after my victory? Why pine or be ashamed of my defeat?"

The more he thought of this long passage of his life, the more clearly he saw his deception. "I'll go into harness again," he said, "and do my duty in that state of life in which it has pleased Heaven to place me. I will see that the buttons of the recruits are properly bright, and that the sergeants make no mistakes in their accounts. I will dine at mess and listen to the Scotch surgeon telling his stories. When I am old and broken, I will go on half-pay, and my old sisters shall scold me. I have '*geliebt* and *gelebt*,' as the girl in Wallenstein says. I am done. Pay the bills and get me a cigar. Find out what there is at the play tonight, Francis, tomorrow we cross by the *Batavier*." He made the above speech, whereof Francis only heard the last two lines, pacing up and down the Boompjes at Rotterdam. The *Batavier* was lying in the basin. He could see the place on the quarterdeck where he and Emmy had sat on the happy voyage out. What had that little Mrs. Crawley to say to him? Psha, tomorrow we will put to sea and return to England, home, and duty!

After June all the little Court society of Pumpernickel used to separate, according to the German plan, and make for a hundred watering places, where they drank at the wells, rode upon donkeys, gambled at the *redoutes*, if they had money and a mind, rushed with hundreds of their kind to gourmandize at the tables d'hôte, and idled away the summer. The English diplomatists went off to Töplitz and Kissengen, their French rivals shut up their *chancellerie* and whisked away to their darling Boulevard de Gand. Everybody went away having any pretensions to politeness, and of course with them, Doctor von Glauber, the Court doctor, and his Baroness. The season for the baths were the most productive periods of the Doctor's practice—he united business with pleasure, and his chief place of resort was Ostend, which is much frequented by Germans, and where the Doctor treated himself and his spouse to what he called a "dib" in the sea.

His interesting patient Jos was a regular milch cow to the Doctor, and he easily persuaded the civilian, both for his own health's sake and that of his charming sister, which was really very much shattered, to pass the summer at that hideous seaport town. Emmy did not care where she went much. Georgy jumped at the idea of a move. As for Becky, she came as a matter of course in the fourth place inside of the fine barouche Mr. Jos had bought, the two domestics being on the box in front. She might have some misgivings about the friends whom she should meet at Ostend, and who might be likely to tell ugly stories—but bah! she was strong enough to hold her own. She had cast such an anchor in Jos now as would require a strong storm to shake. That incident of the picture had finished him. Becky took down her elephant, and put it into the little box which she had had from Amelia ever so many

years ago. Emmy also came off with her lares—her two pictures—and the party finally were lodged in an exceedingly dear and uncomfortable house at Ostend.

There Amelia began to take baths and get what good she could from them, and though scores of people of Becky's acquaintance passed her and cut her, yet Mrs. Osborne, who walked about with her and who knew nobody, was not aware of the treatment experienced by the friend whom she had chosen so judiciously as a companion. Indeed, Becky never thought fit to tell her what was passing under her innocent eyes.

Some of Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's acquaintances, however, acknowledged her readily enough—perhaps more readily than she would have desired. Among those were Major Loder (unattached), and Captain Rook (late of the rifles), who might be seen any day on the dike smoking and staring at the women, and who speedily got an introduction to the hospitable board and select circle of Mr. Joseph Sedley. In fact they would take no denial, they burst into the house whether Becky was at home or not, walked into Mrs. Osborne's drawing-room, which they perfumed with their coats and mustachios, called Jos "old buck," and invaded his dinner table, and laughed and drank for long hours there.

"What can they mean?" asked Georgy, who did not like these gentlemen. "I heard the Major say to Mrs. Crawley yesterday, 'No, no, Becky, you shan't keep the old buck to yourself. We must have the bones in, or dammy, I'll split.' What could the Major mean, Mamma?"

"Major! Don't call *him* Major!" Emmy said. "I'm sure I can't tell what he meant." His presence and that of his friend inspired the little lady with intolerable terror and aversion. They paid her tipsy compliments, they leered at her over the dinner table. And the Captain made her advances that filled her with sickening dismay, nor would she ever see him unless she had George by her side.

Rebecca, to do her justice, never would let either of these men remain alone with Amelia; the Major was disengaged too, and swore he would be the winner of her. A couple of ruffians were fighting for this innocent creature, gambling for her at her own table, and though she was not aware of the rascals' designs upon her, yet she felt a horror and uneasiness in their presence, and longed to fly.

She besought, she entreated Jos to go. Not he. He was slow of movement, tied to his Doctor, and perhaps to some other leading strings. At least Becky was not anxious to go to England.

At last she took a great resolution—made the great plunge. She wrote off a letter to a friend whom she had on the other side of the water, a letter about which she did not speak a word to anybody, which she carried herself to the post under her shawl, nor was any remark made about it. Only that she looked very much flushed and agitated when Georgy met her, and she kissed him and hung over him a great deal that night. She did not come out of her room after her return from her walk. Becky thought it was Major Loder and the Captain who frightened her.

"She mustn't stop here," Becky reasoned with herself. "She must go away,

the silly little fool. She is still whimpering after that gaby of a husband—dead (and served right!) these fifteen years. She shan't marry either of these men. It's too bad of Loder. No, she shall marry the bamboo cane. I'll settle it this very night."

So Becky took a cup of tea to Amelia in her private apartment and found that lady in the company of her miniatures, and in a most melancholy and nervous condition. She laid down the cup of tea.

"Thank you," said Amelia.

"Listen to me, Amelia," said Becky, marching up and down the room before the other and surveying her with a sort of contemptuous kindness. "I want to talk to you. You must go away from here and from the impertinences of these men. I won't have you harassed by them, and they will insult you if you stay. I tell you they are rascals, men fit to send to the hulks. Never mind how I know them. I know everybody. Jos can't protect you, he is too weak and wants a protector himself. You are no more fit to live in the world than a baby in arms. You must marry, or you and your precious boy will go to ruin. You must have a husband, you fool, and one of the best gentlemen I ever saw has offered you a hundred times, and you have rejected him, you silly, heartless, ungrateful little creature!"

"I tried—I tried my best, indeed I did, Rebecca," said Amelia, deprecatingly, "but I couldn't forget——" and she finished the sentence by looking up at the portrait.

"Couldn't forget *him!*" cried out Becky. "That selfish humbug, that low-bred cockney dandy, that padded booby, who had neither wit, nor manners, nor heart, and was no more to be compared to your friend with the bamboo cane than you are to Queen Elizabeth! Why, the man was weary of you and would have jilted you but that Dobbin forced him to keep his word. He owned it to me. He never cared for you. He used to sneer about you to me, time after time, and made love to me the week after he married you."

"It's false! It's false, Rebecca!" cried out Amelia, starting up.

"Look there, you fool," Becky said, still with provoking good humor, and taking a little paper out of her belt, she opened it and flung it into Emmy's lap. "You know his handwriting. He wrote that to me—wanted me to run away with him—gave it to me under your nose the day before he was shot—and served him right!" Becky repeated.

Emmy did not hear her, she was looking at the letter. It was that which George had put into the bouquet and given to Becky on the night of the Duchess of Richmond's ball. It was as she said, the foolish young man had asked her to fly.

Emmy's head sank down, and for almost the last time in which she shall be called upon to weep in this history, she commenced that work. Her head fell to her bosom and her hands went up to her eyes, and there for a while she gave way to her emotions as Becky stood on and regarded her. Who shall analyze those tears, and say whether they were sweet or bitter? Was she most grieved because the idol of her life was tumbled down and shivered at her feet, or indignant that her love had been so despised, or glad because

the barrier was removed which modesty had placed between her and a new, a real affection? "There is nothing to forbid me now," she thought. "I may love him with all my heart now. Oh, I will, I will, if he will but let me and forgive me." I believe it was this feeling rushed over all the others which agitated that gentle little bosom.

Indeed, she did not cry so much as Becky expected. The other soothed and kissed her—a rare mark of sympathy with Mrs. Becky. She treated Emmy like a child, and patted her head. "And now let us get pen and ink and write to him to come this minute," she said.

"I—I wrote to him this morning," Emmy said, blushing exceedingly. Becky screamed with laughter—"*Un biglietto,*" she sang out with Rosina. "*eccolo quà!*"—the whole house echoed with her shrill singing.

Two mornings after this little scene, although the day was rainy and gusty and Amelia had had an exceedingly wakeful night listening to the wind roaring, and pitying all travelers by land and by water, yet she got up early and insisted upon taking a walk on the dike with Georgy, and there she paced as the rain beat into her face, and she looked out westward across the dark sea line and over the swollen billows which came tumbling and frothing to the shore. Neither spoke much, except now and then when the boy said a few words to his timid companion indicative of sympathy and protection.

"I hope he won't cross in such weather," Emmy said.

"I bet ten to one he does," the boy answered. "Look, Mother, there's the smoke of the steamer." It was that signal, sure enough.

But though the steamer was under way, he might not be on board, he might not have got the letter, he might not choose to come. A hundred fears poured one over the other into the little heart, as fast as the waves on the dike.

The boat followed the smoke into sight. Georgy had a dandy telescope and got the vessel under view in the most skillful manner. And he made appropriate nautical comments upon the manner of the approach of the steamer as she came nearer and nearer, dipping and rising in the water. The signal of an English steamer in sight went fluttering up to the mast on the pier. I dare say Mrs. Amelia's heart was in a similar flutter.

The ship came swiftly nearer and nearer. As they went in to meet her at the landing place at the quay, Emmy's knees trembled so that she scarcely could run. She would have liked to kneel down and say her prayers of thanks there. Oh, she thought, she would be all her life saying them!

It was such a bad day that as the vessel came alongside of the quay there were no idlers abroad, scarcely even a commissioner on the lookout for the few passengers in the steamer. That young scapegrace George had fled too, and as the gentleman in the old cloak lined with red stuff stepped on to the shore, there was scarcely anyone present to see what took place, which was briefly this:

A lady in a dripping white bonnet and shawl, with her two little hands out before her, went up to him, and in the next minute she had altogether disappeared under the folds of the old cloak and was kissing one of his hands with all her might, while the other, I suppose, was engaged in holding her to

his heart (which her head just about reached) and in preventing her from tumbling down. She was murmuring something about—forgive—dear William—dear, dear, dearest friend—kiss, kiss, kiss, and so forth—and in fact, went on under the cloak in an absurd manner.

When Emmy emerged from it, she still kept tight hold of one of William's hands, and looked up in his face. It was full of sadness and tender love and pity. She understood its reproach, and hung down her head.

"It was time you sent for me, dear Amelia," he said.

"You will never go again, William?"

"No, never," he answered, and pressed the dear little soul once more to his heart. As they issued out of the customhouse precincts, Georgy broke out on them with his telescope up to his eye and a loud laugh of welcome. He danced round the couple and performed many facetious antics as he led them up to the house. Jos wasn't up yet, Becky not visible (though she looked at them through the blinds). Georgy ran off to see about breakfast. Emmy, whose shawl and bonnet were off in the passage in the hands of Mrs. Payne, now went to undo the clasp of William's cloak, and—we will, if you please, go with George and look after breakfast for the Colonel. The vessel is in port. He has got the prize he has been trying for all his life. The bird has come in at last. There it is with its head on his shoulder, billing and cooing close up to his heart, with soft outstretched fluttering wings. This is what he has asked for every day and hour for eighteen years. This is what he pined after. Here it is—the summit, the end—the last page of the third volume. Good-by, Colonel—God bless you, honest William!—Farewell dear Amelia—Grow green again, tender little parasite, round the rugged old oak to which you cling.

Perhaps it was compunction toward the kind and simple creature who had been the first in life to defend her, perhaps it was a dislike to all such sentimental scenes, but Rebecca, satisfied with her part in the transaction, never presented herself before Colonel Dobbin and the lady whom he married. "Particular business," she said, took her to Bruges, whither she went, and only Georgy and his uncle were present at the marriage ceremony. When it was over and Georgy had rejoined his parents, Mrs. Becky returned (just for a few days) to comfort the solitary bachelor, Joseph Sedley. He preferred a Continental life, he said, and declined to join in housekeeping with his sister and her husband.

Emmy was very glad in her heart to think that she had written to her husband before she read or knew of that letter of George's. "I knew it all along," William said, "but could I use that weapon against the poor fellow's memory? It was that which made me suffer so when you——"

"Never speak of that day again!" Emmy cried out, so contrite and humble that William turned off the conversation by his account of Glorvina and dear old Peggy O'Dowd, with whom he was sitting when the letter of recall reached him. "If you hadn't sent for me," he added with a laugh, "who knows what Glorvina's name might be now?"

When Colonel Dobbin quitted the service, which he did immediately after

his marriage, he rented a pretty little country place in Hampshire not far from Queen's Crawley, where, after the passing of the Reform Bill, Sir Pitt and his family constantly resided now. All idea of a peerage was out of the question, the Baronet's two seats in Parliament being lost. He was both out of pocket and out of spirits by that catastrophe, failed in his health, and prophesied the speedy ruin of the Empire.

Lady Jane and Mrs. Dobbin became great friends—there was a perpetual crossing of pony chaises between the hall and the Evergreens, the Colonel's place. Her ladyship was godmother to Mrs. Dobbin's child, which bore her name and was christened by the Reverend James Crawley, who succeeded his father in the living. And a pretty close friendship subsisted between the two lads, George and Rawdon, who hunted and shot together in the vacations, were both entered of the same college at Cambridge, and quarreled with each other about Lady Jane's daughter, with whom they were both, of course, in love. A match between George and that young lady was long a favorite scheme of both the matrons, though I have heard that Miss Crawley herself inclined toward her cousin.

Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's name was never mentioned by either family. There were reasons why all should be silent regarding her. For wherever Mr. Joseph Sedley went, she traveled likewise, and that infatuated man seemed to be entirely her slave. The Colonel's lawyers informed him that his brother-in-law had effected a heavy insurance upon his life, whence it was probable that he had been raising money to discharge debts. He procured prolonged leave of absence from the East India House, and indeed his infirmities were daily increasing.

On hearing the news about the insurance, Amelia, in a good deal of alarm, entreated her husband to go to Brussels, where Jos then was, and inquire into the state of his affairs. The Colonel quitted home with reluctance (for he was deeply immersed in his *History of the Punjab*, which still occupies him, and much alarmed about his little daughter, whom he idolizes, and who was just recovering from the chicken pox) and went to Brussels and found Jos living at one of the enormous hotels in that city. Mrs. Crawley, who had her carriage, gave entertainments, and lived in a very genteel manner, occupied another suite of apartments in the same hotel.

The Colonel of course did not desire to see that lady, or even think proper to notify his arrival at Brussels, except privately to Jos by a message through his valet. Jos begged the Colonel to come and see him that night, when Mrs. Crawley would be at a soirée and when they could meet *alone*. He found his brother-in-law in a condition of pitiable infirmity, and dreadfully afraid of Rebecca, though eager in his praises of her. She tended him through a series of unheard-of illnesses, with a fidelity most admirable. She had been a daughter to him. "But—but—oh, for God's sake, do come and live near me, and—and—see me sometimes," whimpered out the unfortunate man. The Colonel's brow darkened at this. "We can't, Jos," he said. "Considering the circumstance, Amelia can't visit you."

"I swear to you—I swear to you on the Bible," gasped out Joseph, wanting

to kiss the book, "that she is as innocent as a child, as spotless as your own wife."

"It may be so," said the Colonel gloomily, "but Emmy can't come to you. Be a man, Jos. Break off this disreputable connection. Come home to your family. We hear your affairs are involved."

"Involved!" cried Jos. "Who has told such calumnies? All my money is placed out most advantageously. Mrs. Crawley—that is—I mean—it is laid out to the best interest."

"You are not in debt, then? Why did you insure your life?"

"I thought—a little present to her—in case anything happened, and you know my health is so delicate—common gratitude, you know—and I intend to leave all my money to you—and I can spare it out of my income, indeed I can!" cried out William's weak brother-in-law.

The Colonel besought Jos to fly at once—to go back to India, whither Mrs. Crawley could not follow him, to do anything to break off a connection which might have the most fatal consequences to him.

Jos clasped his hands and cried. He would go back to India. He would do anything, only he must have time, they mustn't say anything to Mrs. Crawley. "She'd—she'd kill me if she knew it. You don't know what a terrible woman she is," the poor wretch said.

"Then why not come away with me?" said Dobbin in reply, but Jos had not the courage. He would see Dobbin again in the morning; he must on no account say that he had been there. He must go now. Becky might come in. And Dobbin quitted him full of forebodings.

He never saw Jos more. Three months afterward Joseph Sedley died at Aix-la-Chapelle. It was found that all his property had been muddled away in speculations and was represented by valueless shares in different bubble companies. All his available assets were the two thousand pounds for which his life was insured, and which were left equally between his beloved "sister Amelia, wife of, etc., and his friend and invaluable attendant during sickness, Rebecca, wife of Lieutenant Colonel Rawdon Crawley, C.B.," who was appointed administratrix.

The solicitor of the insurance company swore it was the blackest case that ever had come before him, talked of sending a commission to Aix to examine into the death, and the company refused payment of the policy. But Mrs., or Lady, Crawley as she styled herself, came to town at once (attended with her solicitors, Messrs. Burke, Thurtell, & Hayes of Thavies Inn) and dared the company to refuse the payment. They invited examination, they declared that she was the object of an infamous conspiracy, which had been pursuing her all through life, and triumphed finally. The money was paid, and her character established, but Colonel Dobbin sent back his share of the legacy to the insurance office and rigidly declined to hold any communication with Rebecca.

She never was Lady Crawley, though she continued so to call herself. His Excellency Colonel Rawdon Crawley died of yellow fever at Coventry Island, most deeply beloved and deplored, and six weeks before the demise of his

brother, Sir Pitt. The estate consequently devolved upon the present Sir Rawdon Crawley, Bart.

He too has declined to see his mother, to whom he makes a liberal allowance, and who, besides, appears to be very wealthy. The Baronet lives entirely at Queen's Crawley with Lady Jane and her daughter, while Rebecca, Lady Crawley, chiefly hangs about Bath and Cheltenham, where a very strong party of excellent people consider her to be a most injured woman. She has her enemies. Who has not? Her life is her answer to them. She busies herself in works of piety. She goes to church, and never without a footman. Her name is in all the charity lists. The destitute orange girl, the neglected washerwoman, the distressed muffin man, find in her a fast and generous friend. She is always having stalls at fancy fairs for the benefit of these hapless beings. Emmy, her children, and the Colonel coming to London sometime back, found themselves suddenly before her at one of these fairs. She cast down her eyes demurely and smiled as they started away from her, Emmy skurrying off on the arm of George (now grown a dashing young gentleman) and the Colonel seizing up his little Janey, of whom he is fonder than of anything in the world—fonder even than of his *History of the Punjab*.

"Fonder than he is of me," Emmy thinks with a sigh. But he never said a word to Amelia that was not kind and gentle, or thought of a want of hers that he did not try to gratify.

Ah! *Vanitas vanitatum*, which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire, or, having it, is satisfied?—Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out.

THE END.